

California State Archives  
State Government Oral History Program

Oral History Interview

with

**EUGENE A. CHAPPIE**

Member, California State Assembly, 1965-1974  
Member, United States House of Representatives, 1981-1986

March 12, 1990, April 3, 1990,  
April 5, 1990 and April 10, 1990  
Placerville, California

By Donald B. Seney  
California State Archives



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## PREFACE

On September 25, 1985, Governor George Deukmejian signed into law A.B. 2104 (Chapter 965 of the Statutes of 1985). This legislation established, under the administration of the California State Archives, a State Government Oral History Program "to provide through the use of oral history a continuing documentation of state policy development as reflected in California's legislative and executive history."

The following interview is one of a series of oral histories undertaken for inclusion in the state program. These interviews offer insights into the actual workings of both the legislative and executive processes and policy mechanisms. They also offer an increased understanding of the men and women who create legislation and implement state development in California state government and of how both the legislative and executive branches of government deal with issues and problems facing the state.

Interviewees are chosen primarily on the basis of their contributions to and influence on the policy process of the state of California. They include members of the legislative and executive branches of the state government as well as legislative staff, advocates, members of the media, and other people who played significant roles in specific issue areas of major and continuing importance to California.

By authorizing the California State Archives to work cooperatively with oral history units at California colleges and universities to conduct interviews, this program is structured to take advantage of the resources and expertise in oral history available thorough California's several institutionally based programs.

Participating as cooperating institutions in the State Government Oral History Program are:

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Claremont Graduate School

Regional Oral History Office  
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University of California, Berkeley

Oral History Program  
University of California, Los Angeles

The establishment of the California State Archives State Government Oral History Program marks one of the most significant commitments made by any state toward the preservation and documentation of its governmental history. It supplements the often fragmentary historical written record by adding an organized primary source, enriching the historical information available on given topics and allowing for more thorough historical analysis. As such, the program, through the preservation and publication of interviews such as the one which follows, will be of lasting value to current and future generations of scholars, citizens, and leaders.

John F. Burns  
State Archivist

July 27, 1988

This interview is printed on acid-free paper.



EUGENE A. CHAPPIE

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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

### Interviewer/Editor:

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B.A., San Jose State College [Political Science]  
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(Political Science)

### Interview Time and Place

Four interviews of one and one-half hours each took place in Eugene A. Chappie's office in Placerville, California, on March 12, 1990, April 3, 1990, April 5, 1990 and April 10, 1990.

### Editing

Dr. Seney checked the verbatim manuscript of the interview against the original tape recordings and edited for punctuation, paragraphing and spellings and verified the proper names. Insertions by the editor are bracketed. The interviewer also prepared the introductory materials.

Mr. Chappie reviewed a copy of the edited transcript and approved it with only minor corrections.

### Papers

Mr. Chappie made available to Dr. Seney some papers from his period of service in the California State Assembly. Those papers are now housed in the California State Archives, Sacramento, California.

### Tapes and Interview Records

The original tape recordings of the interview are in the University Archives, The Library, California State University, Sacramento. Master tapes are preserved at the California State Archives.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

Eugene A. Chappie was born March 28, 1920 in Sacramento, California. He graduated from high school in Sacramento in 1938. Mr. Chappie held a number of jobs before entering military service in 1941, serving in the army air corps until 1946 and rising to the rank of captain. From 1947 until 1975 he operated a diversified farm (grapes, plums, cherries, pecans, filberts and cattle) in Cool, California.

In 1950 Mr. Chappie was appointed to a vacant seat on the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors by Governor Earl Warren. He served on the board until January 1965 when he entered the California Assembly as the elected member for the Sixth District. While a member of the assembly Mr. Chappie though a Republican served as chair of the Welfare Committee from 1967-1969. During that period major changes were made in the state's welfare system including tying welfare payments to the cost of living index, requiring the state to set reform standards for welfare in all counties as well as bringing all local government welfare workers under the state's personnel merit system. When the Republicans gained control of the assembly in the 1968 election, Chappie was appointed chair of the Rules Committee and served in that position in the 1969-1971 term. During this period the Rules Committee was a housekeeping committee rather than the key committee in determining the flow of legislation that it has subsequently become. During a period in the 1970s he also served as assembly Republican caucus chairman.

During his tenure in the legislature Mr. Chappie pioneered legislation in the area of elementary architectural barriers for the handicapped. Other important legislation with a more direct bearing on his district authored by Chappie included legislation regulating the safety and use of snowmobiles and efforts to introduce planning concepts into the Lake Tahoe basin.

Mr. Chappie has also served on various boards and commissions. President Ronald Reagan appointed him to the President's Architectural Transportation Barrier Control Board. At the state of California level he has served on the Commission on the Status of Women, the Commission of the Californias and The Heritage Preservation Commission.

In 1980 Mr. Chappie was elected to the United States House of Representatives. During his six years in the house he served on the Agriculture Committee, the Small Business Committee, the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee and the Select Committee on Drugs and Narcotics Abuse. Chappie decided not to run for reelection to the house in 1986.

After leaving the U.S. House of Representatives he was a political consultant for the national public relations and political consulting firm of Flashman-Hillard.

In 1988 Governor George Deukmejian appointed him to fill a vacancy on the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors. In his only election loss, Mr. Chappie was defeated when he ran for a full term on the board in 1990. After an active retirement in Georgetown, California, Mr. Chappie died on May 31, 1992.

[Session 1, March 12, 1990]

[Tape 1, Side A]

SENEY: I want to start out by asking you to talk about your family, about your mother and your father. I know they were Italian immigrants. Could you tell me where they were from in Italy? When they came to the United States? Why they came? And where they settled and what they did?

CHAPPIE: I finally found my mom's home which was in La Provencia di Zeri which is near Parma in northern Italy. I'm still trying to ferret out where my dad came from because of the loss of the family name. When I started the first grade, I had no English, the teacher had no Italian, I had no birth certificate, and she proceeded to change the name. That's created a little difficulty.

SENEY: So she created Chappie then.

CHAPPIE: Well, our family name was Chiappa, C-H-I-A-P-P-A which apparently was easily translated into Chappie. And to this day I still have problems because my only certificate of birth is my

Italian-Catholic baptismal certificate. Not being born in a hospital, that's all I have by way of identification. In order to remain in the military, my dad had to go to Superior Court and get it legally changed so that they would know who the Sam Hill I am. [Laughter] But as near as I can determine they were all--and having visited Mom's area--farmers. She used to relate taking the cows into the countryside, and the sheep, and tending them as a youngster. They came here somewhere in the early 1900's, I think somewhere around 1919, 1920. I was born in Sacramento, and shortly thereafter we moved to Cool, and set up the family farm which was kept in the family until just recently when I sold the last part of it. I really got crowded out by urban sprawl, I guess, for lack of a better word.

SENEY: What kind of farm was it?

CHAPPIE: We had a real family farm. We had a couple of sections of land; it was my mom and her mother and two brothers. Ultimately, when I came back from World War II, I bought in and had a partnership with one of my uncles. We had olives and purebred Herefords. I had 250 head of purebred Hereford cows. We had a small acreage

of plums--about fifteen acres--fifteen acres of cherries, fifty of grapes, fifty-five or sixty of pears, and we had the only commercial filbert grove in the state. So we had a very diversified farm, and at that elevation in the foothills, you had to diversify because if you had one crop failure, you had a little something to fall back on. And I had 120 acres of irrigated pasture, but with the authorization of the Auburn Dam, why the county assessor began to increase [assessed] values and taxes. That just put us out of business. So, I just sold the last few acres, two years ago as a matter of fact. It's kind of sad, but that's progress.

SENEY: Tell me about your mother.

CHAPPIE: Mom had eight grades [of education] in the old country which I suspect would be equivalent to an A.A. [Associate of Arts degree] today. Pop had four-and-a-half grades; he self-educated himself after they got here. He did quite well. When he passed on, he had the largest independent bakery in northern California. He had departed the ranch in the early twenties. I guess he got into a family squabble, so he and mom moved to



Sacramento and started the business with a couple hundred dollars. He worked hard.

SENEY: He was a baker?

CHAPPIE: He had never been a hands-on baker, but when they first arrived here, he had apparently driven a horse-drawn bakery delivery wagon, and so had some knowledge of it. When they left the ranch, he went down to Sacramento and rented a vacated bakery; he found a baker that could punch dough and started out. Ultimately, he did quite well. A feisty little guy.

SENEY: What was the name of the bakery?

CHAPPIE: It was originally, obviously, U.S. Bakery, and [Laughter] then it became Golden Crust [Bakery]. He had a partner who was a Slav who actually ran the bakery. Pop was kind of the salesman, the super salesman. He ran the delivery operation and gathered up new customers. And it is now Zanzi's Golden Crust. Still quite popular.

SENEY: It is a large bakery, isn't it?

CHAPPIE: Well, yes, it's all bottom bread. You know they don't make any sliced bread or any of that type stuff. It's all bottom bread: French rolls, and specialty sourdough and things of that nature.

SENEY: Your parents were hard-working people.

CHAPPIE: Yes, yes. We knew what it was to work. And, well hell, it was a matter of survival.

[Laughter]

SENEY: So then you grew up in Sacramento and went to school in Sacramento?

CHAPPIE: Yes, there were no schools in Cool, but I always leaned toward the ranch. And vacation time and whenever, I was always back at the ranch with Nona [grandmother] and the uncles. And after the war--I volunteered right at the outset--Pop asked me to go into business with him, and I said, "Well, I'll give her a shot," but I didn't really care for it. I stayed with him for six months and then I went back up to the country.

SENEY: This was after World War II?

CHAPPIE: Yes. I bought into the ranch; that was in '46.

SENEY: Tell me a little about your childhood. What do you remember of your childhood in Sacramento and on the ranch, things that now seem important to you?

CHAPPIE: Well, it was pretty good at the ranch. It was kind of hell in Sacramento. I was trying to learn to speak English, and fortunately, at least in my view, we didn't have bilingual education. Very clannish; after the sun went down, you had well better be in your part of town. The town

wasn't that big. There were about thirty thousand people in Sac[ramento] in those days. So the "wops" went to their area at sundown, and the "dog-eaters" went to theirs, and the "bohunks" went to theirs, and "chinks" and "ricies" and the "Buddha-heads". And then during the daytime, why, there was continual warfare. I don't think I missed a fistfight any day of my life until I was about fifteen years old.

SENEY: When you say "dog-eaters", who are you referring to?

CHAPPIE: Slavs. It was very ethnic, but we got along. It was like the name change; you didn't argue with the system, you know. [Laughter] There was no great movement for rights for the downtrodden minorities. And when you look back compared to now, there were no drugs, and they were really happy times. We fought hard. We made friends and went about our business. I can recall somewhat of a struggle to exist, but you were proud to be poor. Nothing wrong with it. You didn't walk around bellyaching and bleating and moaning the fate of the homeless and all that good stuff. No, they were fun days, fun days.

SENEY: So all of your primary and secondary education was in Sacramento then?

CHAPPIE: That's correct.

SENEY: High school?

CHAPPIE: That was the extent of it.

SENEY: You never went beyond high school?

CHAPPIE: No, I grew up in the middle of the Depression, and I took Smith-Hughes so I would have some semblance of a profession when I hit the streets.

SENEY: What does Smith-Hughes mean?

CHAPPIE: It was one of the first voc ed [vocational education] courses, and it was apparently named after a couple of congressmen; great opportunities, and we had great instructors. The school was well-equipped so I had a smattering of--and of course, my older uncle was a cabinetmaker from the old country--carpentry. I did some tin bending in high school and even in junior high. They had just implemented the junior high thing when I hit the seventh grade; and they had manual training. If you were interested, you could go into journalism or print shop. I leaned towards auto mechanics. So, when I hit the streets in '38, I had second year apprenticeship as a mechanic; I went to work for twelve dollars a week.

SENEY: Where did you work? What did you do?

CHAPPIE: I initially worked at Schwab Tire which was the largest tire shop in Sacramento, in that general area. I went on as a tire changer and then went into building batteries. Then, ultimately, I got into the vulcanizing department and ended up as the head vulcanizer after about a year, year and a half. That was brutal. That was hard work and not very healthy. So I left there and went to driving long-line truck for Safeway. And by 1941 I'd bought my first home, a brand new home. We paid \$5,000 for it. I borrowed \$500 to make the down payment. Then the war come along and I got patriotic and volunteered. That took about four, four-and-a-half years.

SENEY: Tell me about your wartime experiences. Where did you train? Where did you serve?

CHAPPIE: I enlisted in the air corps. So I chugged out to Mather [Field] and enlisted. They would assign you to any base of your choice, so I chose Mather, obviously. And during my high school time, I always wore patched clothes, holey shoes with cardboard in them. ROTC [Reserved Officer Training Corps] came along, and so I figured, "What the hell, I'll take ROTC." We had good, clean clothes--ah well, not clean but I mean unpatched--for three days a week when we had R-O.

I worked my way up through the ranks and came out as a captain in that operation. So that helped when I went in. So I got into the air corps, and geez, there was no discipline whatsoever. I got in trouble with the CO [Commanding Officer] one day for calling, "Attention" when he walked through the orderly room. He kind of give me a good lashing, so I said, "Well, in the old phrase, sir, how can I transfer out of this chickenshit outfit?" Because the training in high school was all infantry and very rigid. So he said, "Well, you got two choices. You can go over the hill or go to OCS [Officer Candidate School]. We don't want to lose you." So you had three choices in OCS. I took ordinance, obviously, because my short stint in the air corps was in aircraft maintenance. My first choice was ordinance which was mechanics, and then my second choice was the paratroops, and my third choice was armor. I got my third choice. I got Mr. Patton and I got discipline coming out of my pores. [Laughter] But it was a great experience. I got my commission at [Fort] Knox [Kentucky].

SENEY: So you went to Officer Candidate School in armor?

CHAPPIE: Yes, OCS in Fort Knox, and it was interesting. My heritage caught up with me again. During my thirteen weeks there, the FBI got on my case; about two o'clock in the morning, roused me out and wanted to know why I had two names. I still had Chappie-Chiappa, apparently. You know, who would think of that? Here I am a patriot.

[Laughter] And, by George, I had to get the old man out of bed. There was one Superior Court in town [Sacramento], and the judge was an Italian. So the old man rushed down there, and they got the county clerk out of bed, and got the name changed legally. My outfit went to Africa. And I wanted to go the ETO [European Theater of Operations]; I can still read and write and speak Italian, and I ended up in Monterey. So I went to the South Pacific, the only one out of my whole OCS class. I spent a little better than two years in the Pacific. Twelve islands.

SENEY: I take it you had a lot of combat experience then?

CHAPPIE: I ended up with a company of amphibious tractors which are waterborne tanks, in effect. Ours did not have the heavy armor. We traveled in LSTs [Landing Ship Transports] because it took one LST for a platoon of tractors.

SENEY: LST is landing ship transport?

CHAPPIE: Yes. LST--landing ship transport. What we'd do is go to the designated area of attack, and we'd rendezvous 2,000 yards offshore. The infantry or the marines would come down over the side and drop into these things. We could haul a squad of troops or a jeep or a seventy-five cannon or supplies etc., etc. We were the first to hit the beach--you'd have navy fire to soften them up, supposedly--then we had amphibious tanks, real tanks, that carried 175 millimeter and then seventy-five howitzers. They were really the first wave, and we were right behind them. We'd drop the troops off, go back for more troops. Ultimately then we would start hauling out casualties, bringing in supplies. Generally, after the beach had been secured, why we'd set up perimeter defense, and as soon as they'd start moving inland, why then the navy would bring their cargo ships in with their own Higgins boats. And then we'd go off to some other activities.

SENEY: Was there anything in your military experience that you found useful subsequently or . . .

CHAPPIE: Yes. I found a real, a real set of values there. It taught you to live with your fellow human



being. You had to get along in the military. And so you had to learn to compromise, or if you couldn't get along with that SOB, you just avoided the mother. [Laughter] Or you know, it would get violent. I learned a lot of things in the military. I got a little more education. I still look back on it with pride. And of course, I cried a lot during Vietnam, the way we treated the kids.

SENEY: I suppose becoming an officer provided you with an opportunity you wouldn't have had otherwise.

CHAPPIE: Oh, yes, yes. That's right. I got in trouble a number of times. They oftentimes felt I was a little too lenient on my troops, particularly when I got overseas. If I got a liquor ration, then I shared it with my platoon before I became a company commander. And I got set back on promotion file a couple of times because my superiors felt that I was a little bit too lenient on the troops. I may well have been, but we got along fine and most of us survived; we had great rapport. I still get occasional Christmas cards, if you can believe it, after all these years.

SENEY: Do you suppose it gave you a taste for leadership and being in charge that might have influenced you subsequently to go into politics?

CHAPPIE: That may have been a part of the mix. I think that I learned to leave that behind me, the rank thing. There are still people from World War II, and I don't say it with, you know, any intent [Laughter] to be critical, but some people can never forget their rank, particularly in the air corps. Geez, they got to be a bird colonel and God, I don't hold with that. We have some of them around here [El Dorado County], believe it or not. No, no when I walked out the door, I said, "Hell, that's, that's all behind me." You know. On to bigger and better things.

SENEY: How long was it after the peace was signed, in September 1945, that you got home again?

CHAPPIE: I didn't get home. I got to jacking around over there and got smart and wanted to come home with the tank outfit. I got myself assigned to it, and then they disbanded the damn thing. And I kind of dropped through the cracks and got stuck with dismantling a field artillery flash battalion and that took an extra six months. Mother couldn't understand what the hell I was doing over there. Then I stayed on active duty

and thought for a while of going back in. So I took a two-week tour, I think in late '46, and by that time, the army had turned totally chickenshit. There is no other way to describe it. It was very competitive because they were bringing officers down in grade, breaking them from a light colonel to a master sergeant. So there was real war going on in terms of pecking order and rank. I just said, "The hell with that." I stuck around and then the Korean thing came along and then they caught up with me, sent me back home, and then ultimately, I became over-aged in grade. So they mustered me out.

SENEY: There was a break between your service from World War II ending in '46 before you then went back in again around in 1950 for the Korean conflict. And you were a captain at this point.

CHAPPIE: Yes.

SENEY: But by this time you would have been thirty years old.

CHAPPIE: Oh, hell, I was . . .

SENEY: You were born in 1920.

CHAPPIE: 1920. Yes, I was thirty years old.

SENEY: And at that point you were too old to be a captain.

CHAPPIE: That's right. Overage in grade. So that was part of the combination.

SENEY: What did you do between this period of 1946 and 1950?

CHAPPIE: First I damned near died. When I got back on board ship in Manila, I weighed 126 pounds. I had malaria and dengue, and then they thought I had cancer. My lymph nodes puffed up about the size of eggs. And geez, I just fought them. I wouldn't go to a military hospital. I had jungle rot. I had great big sores; I couldn't get my shoes on anymore. But I got home and convinced them to let me out. I went to the old country doc there in Auburn, and he discovered I had glandular fever, and he cured me. So as I was coming out of that, I then went back and bought into the ranch. I was ranching when I volunteered for the Korean thing. That didn't pan out so then went back home and got real busy. By this time we were generating kids and . . .

SENEY: Now you were married in 1941?

CHAPPIE: Right.

SENEY: How did you meet your wife? Tell me about her.

CHAPPIE: Well, she was of Sicilian parentage, and there was kind of a caste situation there. The high class "wops" kind of looked down on the

Sicilians. When I took to tracking around after her, why my mom was a little bit upset. She kept saying, "You know, she's Sicilian." [Laughter] We got to courting in, I guess, the last year of high school. We went together until I married her in '41. So I'd known her for several years. Her dad died when she was quite young, and her mom worked in the cannery.

SENEY: And you began ranching in 1946. I take it that you were involved in all these aspects of the cattle, of the filbert . . .

CHAPPIE: Yes.

[End Tape 1, Side A]

[Begin Tape 1, Side B]

SENEY: I noticed as we were talking, on your suit coat there's a red, white and green button which obviously stands for things Italian.

CHAPPIE: That's the Italian tricolor. I'm very proud of my heritage. I've played on it very heavily. Lot of memorabilia. I was chairman of the Italian caucus. I started that in the state legislature. There were several of us Italians, got to where we would have annual meetings. I anointed [Assemblyman] Willie [L.] Brown [Jr.] and [Assemblyman] Curtis [R.] Tucker and brought

them in as token Italians. So we've always played on it, but it runs pretty deep.

SENEY: One of the things that I ran across in my research about you was the fact that you make wine.

CHAPPIE: Yes, sir, the 25th I'm going to change wine. We do everything by the moon. That's the dark of the moon. I made it last September, capped the barrels off in later part of December, and Nona, grandmother, always said, "The dark of the moon, you always change wine," and if you don't, by George, it seems to never settle. Around the ranch I cut my calves by the moon, I wean them by the moon, and planted the garden by the moon, did everything. And surprisingly, most of those things work. If you wean a calf in the light of the moon, that sucker will beller and lose weight for ten, twelve days. If you wean them in the dark of the moon, in about three days mom forgets him, and he forgets her, and they both go on about their business. If you castrate them in the dark of the moon, they heal quickly and don't bleed, and the flies don't get to them. After a while you are a believer.

SENEY: I take it your farm was pretty prosperous.

CHAPPIE: You know, you're in the hands of the Fates. You fight everything, the market, the pests, [Laughter] the elements, but by being as well diversified as we were, we did quite well. Of course, we had a lot of free labor--not free, cheap. We always paid our kids a going wage . . .

SENEY: . . . Your children, you mean . . .

CHAPPIE: We had thirteen children between us. But during harvest time, we had forty or fifty people around there in addition to the kids. Harvest ran a good part of the year.

SENEY: Did you find that farming and the experience was good training for politics? Was there anything useful there?

CHAPPIE: Well, you learned to be patient among other things. Aesop said, "Plodding wins the race." I don't know that you could say that. It taught you to be frugal. You had to watch your pennies, and I guess because of that, on occasion, I was branded as a screaming right-wing conservative nut. But then you certainly learned the value of a dollar and the need for it. In 1951 it hailed for ten seconds, and we figured we lost over \$100,000. So then you go back to the bank and borrow those hard dollars, and you develop a set

of values there that stick with you. It certainly ingrains, at least in me, the fact that you can't afford to be wasteful. I found in politics that seems to be the norm more often than not, and I don't like it.

SENEY: You started in your political career with the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors in 1950.

CHAPPIE: I was appointed by Governor [Earl] Warren. The incumbent had died, and some of the people over there decided that they needed a pigeon so they encouraged me to go for it. I had been looking around. I didn't like what I saw really. There were some shenanigans going on.

SENEY: Let me go back to the appointment first . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Yes . . .

SENEY: . . . because the governor's hardly going to pluck someone out of the phone book or . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Right . . .

SENEY: . . . pick them on the basis of your good looks.

CHAPPIE: I was competing with the son of the incumbent.

SENEY: You must have had some political connections at that time; could you tell me about your involvement in politics up to that point?

CHAPPIE: Virtually, none. My dad, God rest him, was a feisty little five-foot-four cat, and he got heavily involved in sheriffs' races and



CHAPPIE: councilmen races in Sacramento, and had developed a friendship with a guy that ran a gas station, Peter [E.] Mitchell, who gained a seat on the city council and became quite influential. He became mayor, ultimately, and was on the State Public Utilities Commission. He helped. He was a personal friend of Earl Warren; Warren had appointed him to the PUC [Public Utilities Commission]. But I think equally as important was the President of Heart Federal Savings and Loan, Wendell [T.] Robie. He was a crusty old bastard. He came across the river and said, "Goddamnit. Gino, you got to go for it." Even though he was in the adjacent county, he was a heavy supporter of Warren, one of the early-on conservative Republicans. Between him and my dad, I think they were pretty instrumental.

But there was a lot of internal politics here in town. Downtown Placerville sure didn't want me because I wasn't part of the good old boys--which I'm being accused of nowadays. They worked pretty hard against me. But I gained the appointment, and three months later I had to run for election. I went to the dago warehouse and borrowed \$100 and ran my campaign on ninety-six bucks. I had four dollars left, and had a hell

of a party after we had won. I won by seventeen votes. Then after that, why, it was pretty easy.

SENEY: Describe that campaign to me.

CHAPPIE: Well, hell, there were only 300 voters in the district at the time. I just had an old '47 DeSoto, and I sure burned up the roads. You talk about door-to-door, you had to drive to them in those days. There were a few people in Cool and a few in Greenwood, and I had Coloma in the district, and that was it. I had a stroke of genius. I got into the absentee ballot real heavy. And there were seventeen absentee ballots, and I don't know if they were all for me, but that was the margin I won by. I learned a lesson there, the value of absentees.

SENEY: That's a strategy that's being used today.

CHAPPIE: Oh, yes. [Governor George] Duke [Deukmejian] became governor in his first race because of the absentee ballots.

SENEY: You served on the board of supervisors until 1965 when you entered the legislature.

CHAPPIE: Yes.

SENEY: So you were elected four times then.

CHAPPIE; Yes, ran unopposed one time.

SENEY: What was it like to serve on the board? Can you give me a sense, over that period of fifteen

years, what it was like and what were the important issues?

CHAPPIE: Hell, there were no issues, except roads. Initially, it paid \$125 a month. And I got to looking around and said, "Geez, these cats are spending a lot of money for that job. I wonder what's it all about." Well, I found out. There were a couple of us young Turks that ran, and we got to digging. Everybody started running for cover, I mean, they had a racket going here.

SENEY: Tell me about that. Tell me some details.

CHAPPIE: Hell, it ran from the county clerk to the superior court; we had one judge. I guess the easiest and quickest example is that there were 6,000 people in the county, with a lot of nonresident owners who had a lot of real estate. Well, if you were an old pensioner, and you were squatting out here, and maybe you had a couple of thousand acres, lot of timber obviously, or maybe a working mine, and you'd pass on, the coroner would immediately communicate with the county clerk and say, "God, old Jake died over there." So they would immediately dig around and see where the heirs and the assigns lived. And in most cases they lived somewhere in the east or somewhere else. So they would plant the old boy,

and there wouldn't be much said. And about six months later, why, there would be a little quiet title action before the superior court judge, and then they would split the loot. And one of my predecessors on the board of supes [supervisors] over there ended up with a section of land up in Lake Tahoe which his grandkids and great-grandkids are still living in luxury off of.

SENEY: You might take it for taxes in other words. Is that the way it worked?

CHAPPIE: Hell, in many cases the taxes were paid, but they didn't notify the heirs that old Jake had become deceased, and they stole the damn stuff.

SENEY: So it was genuine, outright fraud.

CHAPPIE: Oh, yes, yes. Then we had an old gal here that was the county treasurer, and, oh, she was "Miss Priss." She was a spinster and a lot of nights after the board meeting--we only met one day a month--why I would sit around and wait to drive her home. It would be dark. In those days the superior court judge and chairman of the board, once a month, had to go down to the basement and count the money in the vault. One day she was short a penny. I'll be damned, we sat there until about ten o'clock, and I kept saying, "Del, I'll give you the penny. I got to go home." We

had to find the penny and account for it. When she died, suffering Christ, you couldn't believe what she had stolen. [Laughter] I mean it was evil. [Laughter] I was her pall-bearer, too. So I can say with some degree of pride, we really cleaned this mess up. Old [Thomas J.] Tom Sigwart [Jr.], he's still around. We had a lot of fun. Yes, the county clerk resigned, retired. The county tax collector, oh that sapsucker, we had him by the balls. He quit.

SENEY: What was he doing?

CHAPPIE: Hell, one day they moved the wall safe and found \$20,000 laying behind there. [Laughter] He didn't know where it came from, or what the hell to do with it. I mean, you couldn't believe it. He'd walk around with your [Laughter] tax collections in his pockets. It was frontier time.

SENEY: [Laughter]

CHAPPIE: And the DA [district attorney] ran the slot machines at Tahoe. We had slot machines even though they're illegal . . .

SENEY: . . . On the California side . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Oh yes, Christ. [Laughter] Then the newly- elected sheriff let it be known he was going to take over the slot machines, and he and

the DA got into a war. We were finding bodies in trunks in automobiles at Tahoe. You could not believe it. Two of the major drug dealers in the entire world had the Sahati<sup>1</sup> Brothers' Club up at South Shore. They'd come down to the board meetings to attempt to intimidate the board. They'd bring their shills with them. You would see the guns. [Laughter] Yeah, they dug a trench down the middle of Stateline Boulevard there and put a pipeline and pumping plant right in the middle of our county road and ran the pipeline into the lake to suck water out of it. I went up there one night with the sheriff, and I wondered about my good judgment after that. He went in and confronted the Sahatis. First, he went down and shot the lock off the pump in the middle of the road and turned the water off. You know, we had some fun over that. Hell, there were some threats. It was really frontier time.

SENEY: The name Sahati is still in South Lake Tahoe, is it not?

CHAPPIE: No, it's [Richard] Shehadi; he's the auto dealer. But the others were, they were "ragheads." They were Arabs, and they were running the international drug ring. One went to the pen and

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<sup>1</sup>Eddie and Nick Sahati

the other, I don't know what ever happened to him. I knew them well. Yeah, those were fun times. Fun times. It's changed.

SENEY: You're smiling broadly as you say that.

CHAPPIE: [Laughter] Yeah, you're making \$125 a month and having all this entertainment and excitement. But, hell, in those days, you published the welfare recipients' names in the paper, and we signed all of the warrants. Every bill that was paid, the supervisor had to sign it. One guy would go out to the market out here on [Highway] 49 and check the grocery order [for the welfare recipient], just to see nobody was cheating, and then he would steal all the bacon out of the orders. God damn. [Laughter]

SENEY: [Laughter] This would be for the jail, maybe you mean.

CHAPPIE: No, this was for the welfare recipients. He would go out and steal the bacon out of the welfare recipient's grocery order. God damn. [Laughter] Then we caught one of them scalping penny a gallon for road oil because we all had district road budgets. I kept my road budget right here.

SENEY: In your pocket?

CHAPPIE: And I knew where every penny was, and I knew where my road crew was every day. And it still worked a lot better than it does now. You don't know where the hell anyone is. You can't find them if you need them now.

SENEY: Was this system then that each supervisor was pretty much in command in his own district . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Yes . . .

SENEY: . . . and what you wanted done in your district, the others would go along with?

CHAPPIE: That's it.

SENEY: Is that still the case on the board?

CHAPPIE: No, I'm glad we're out of that syndrome. In those days it worked all right because, what the hell, you were geographically separated. I mean the people from Georgetown come over here, they would get thrown in jail or beat up, and they hated our kids. They were really treated like aborigines. So it was very provincial. Roads were relatively poor because it wasn't until the late thirties that the state secondary highway system was established. They were all county roads. Hell, you had a forty-cent district road tax, and you had five guys on the road crew and a dump truck and a grader and a lot of shovels. But they did a pretty good job.



SENEY: Did the county grow much in those fifteen years in terms of population?

CHAPPIE: When I got on the board there were 6,000; when I left there were about 40,000, and then when I came back, there were about 125,000 or 130,000.

SENEY: So there's been considerable difference in the intervening period.

CHAPPIE: The big period, of course, has been the last ten years.

SENEY: We'll talk about that at the end . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . OK . . .

SENEY: . . . when we get through with everything else. In 1964 you ran for the Sixth Assembly seat.

CHAPPIE: Correct.

SENEY: What motivated you to do that? What was behind that decision?

CHAPPIE: I had been eyeing it for a period of time, had become pretty well acquainted with the district. I was pretty active in the regional supervisors' association. Then in 1955 I had formed the Mountain Counties Water Resource Association, which still exists, believe it or not. And that gave me a pretty good name ID [identification] throughout most of the counties in the Mother Lode, and that was essentially the Sixth AD [assembly district]. Senator [Edwin J.] Ed Regan

who ultimately went on up to the appellate court, was the DA [District Attorney] up in Siskiyou County; he and I became friends. He was a Democrat, but we became friends. He was interested in water, and he helped me put the thing [water association] together. So I was active in that and the Supervisors' Association. And when [Assemblyman Paul J.] Lunardi moved up, I said, "What the hell." And so I ran. That was the one where [Governor Edmund G.] Pat Brown rented a Greyhound bus and toured the Mother Lode campaigning against me. [Laughter] And . . .

SENEY: Who was your opponent in 1964?

CHAPPIE: Boy, they picked a lulu. They picked a screaming lib[eral] by the name of Howard K. Smith. He worked for PG&E [Pacific Gas and Electric Company] and he was a weekend warrior, big, cigar-smoking light colonel. I mean he was really impressed with himself. And he just had a great propensity for putting his foot in his mouth. And I mean, he was really a nothing candidate. That was the year they had instituted the CAL Plan<sup>1</sup> patterned after the Love plan of

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<sup>1</sup>The CAL Plan, sponsored by the California State Republican Party, targeted specific legislative seats that the California Republicans thought they could win over from incumbent Democrats.

Colorado where you picked seats, and then you really went at them. And . . .

SENEY: . . . This was the California Assembly leadership that was anxious to recapture the control of the assembly.

CHAPPIE: Right, right. The young Turks.

SENEY: Was this Gaylord Parkinson?

CHAPPIE: Gaylord Parkinson.

SENEY: The state chairman had a role in this as well.

CHAPPIE: Oh, yes. He was the master mechanic. Great guy, then he went bananas. At any rate, we ran that campaign, I think, for \$12,000.

SENEY: So they were very helpful to you then, the Republican caucus.

CHAPPIE: I'm still waiting for the check. The caucus was pretty good, but God damn that CAL plan. You know, I got a call one day from this cat that was out giving us all this advice. I can't deny that the advice wasn't good. They had some good people on the staff.

I said, "OK, we got a \$12,000 budget. I don't have any money."

He said, "That's no problem." He says, "The check's in the mail." [Laughter]

Hell, we spent money. All at once the guys are saying, "You owe me." So I remortgaged the

ranch, you know. Goddamnit, I had to pay the bills. And I'm still waiting for the check. Nonetheless, we won the election. That taught me a lesson, never spend your own money in a campaign.

SENEY: Tell a little about the decision to run and who encouraged you. Did the CAL plan people come and say, "Here's a strong guy who's a well-known supervisor and . . ."

CHAPPIE: No, it was an interesting thing. There was a guy up in Marysville. He's still around, Gordon Cinnamon. And there's a guy here, Gordon Stangland. And one day these two cats come over to the ranch and said, "Hey, Gino, why don't you take a little ride down to Jackson with us?" "OK, what's the problem?" "Well, we got some things to talk about." Gathered up and went to Jackson, and there was a conclave of the eleven counties, Republican committees. All at once, it's oops, they want me to run for the assembly. Well, geez, I'm up to here in the ranch, and we got five kids by then, four, three, I don't know. And so I looked around to see who the other aspirants were, and it was an interesting mix. There were a half dozen of us.

SENEY: This was on the Republican side?

CHAPPIE: Yes, so I went home. There was including Maggie Meggs from Grass Valley--she was a pistol--and another county supervisor, and two or three other hopefuls. So I went home and talked to the wife, and decided, why not, what the hell. So at the next meeting in Jackson why I said, "OK, I'm going to go." There was an effort to kind of pare the numbers down, and that didn't work. I was afraid I'd get pared. So we just decided everybody was on their own. They started the damn treadmill. I think I wore most of them out.

SENEY: This was an eleven county district?

CHAPPIE: Eleven counties. It went from Death Valley to north of Tahoe. It was a big sapsucker . . .

SENEY: . . . 20 percent of the state's territory . . .

CHAPPIE: Yes. I used to have to get permission from the speaker to leave the state to go visit my district in the winter.

So we won it. Then I totaled three cars and one airplane representing that damn district. I was kind of glad when they reapportioned me out of it. [Laughter] God!

SENEY: Was it a tough primary? I take it, it was. You traveled extensively throughout the district.

CHAPPIE: I ended up butting heads with a wild-eyed kid from up in Marysville, District Ten, Brooks Fisk.

I never forgot him. He taught me a lesson. He got into direct mail and put out a pretty effective mailer. I only won by 2,500 votes in the primary. But I cleaned the guy's plow in the general. So that was an interesting campaign.

SENEY: This was Smith who ran in the general?

CHAPPIE: Yes, yes.

SENEY: This had been a Republican district before Lunardi beat [Assemblyman] Francis [C.] Lindsay in 1958.

CHAPPIE: Lindsay was his own worst enemy. He got self-important. Then he got tangled up with that kind of scandal with the damned soil conservation stuff. He dug himself a hole. I like Francis because he was a visionary.

SENEY: He was an expert in the soil conservation field, was he not, an engineer of some sort?

CHAPPIE: Well, kind of self-anointed. Then he got to be chairman of the water committee, so he got to be an expert in water. Hell, when you learn it runs downhill, you're an expert. [Laughter] No, but I like Francis, he really had a vision, and that's why we have no water in El Dorado County. We had proposed . . .

SENEY: When you say we, you mean . . .

CHAPPIE: He and I and a couple of other supervisors from Placer and another one from this county to develop the entire American River watershed.

[End Tape 1, Side B]

[Begin Tape 2, Side A]

CHAPPIE: During the war [World War II] the State Department of Water Resources had been doing a lot of studies up here for lack of something to do. And they had put together some real packages. One envisioned the total development of the American River watershed by someone. The state couldn't afford it, and so they came to the counties. And Lindsay said, "You know, here's a goose with the golden egg." So we set up a joint meeting in the old courthouse up town. We had the audacity to come over here and say to the people that were running EID [El Dorado Irrigation District] and who were involved at that time with developing Sly Park and Jenkinson Lake. Walter [E.] Jenkinson was a tyrant; he was the manager of the EID. The El Dorado Irrigation District who are now [1990] without water, [and there is a] building moratorium. And he, [Walter E. Jenkinson] in effect, said, "You no-good rattafracks, get your ass out of town. You have no business intruding into the affairs of the El

CHAPPIE: Dorado Irrigation District--even though it was only a small part of the county. We know what the water needs of this county will be. There is nobody here. And we don't need any more water. We got water running out of our ears. Just get the hell out of here."

Well, Placer County said, "Adios." They went home, developed the American River Project. They have a gold mine. I mean you cannot believe. They did what SMUD [Sacramento Municipal Utility District] did on the south fork.

Well, SMUD's sitting down there battened down and happy and said, "Geez, El Dorado County is in total disarray." And they slid in the back door. I fought those mothers for ten years without any assistance whatsoever from the other members of the board. "Ah, what the hell, we don't need the water."

During the course of that fandango, I did protect the Georgetown Divide. We had formed a public utility district over there and had Loon Lake and the water rights pertinent to it. And it was a privately-owned system. The district had hoped to acquire it. And, ultimately, the owners of that system let it fall into total



disrepair. So we farmers in Cool would take our labor force and go up there and work on the ditch, and in the spring we would go up and put mattresses in the cracks of the dam. And ultimately, the owners virtually walked away from it so we farmers bought the rights and held them in trust--I mortgaged the ranch again for that--for the day when the PUD [Placer Utility District] in its negotiations with SMUD had money to reimburse us, and they did. So we ended up with SMUD building Stumpy Meadows for us and a part of our distribution system and the assigning of the water rights to that drainage. So at this point we're fat; we're real fat, the only area in the county that has a good firm water supply.

SENEY: This would be in the northern part of the county.

CHAPPIE: This is over on the Divide. Yes.

SENEY: But this southern part of the county because of the situation you described is really without water.

CHAPPIE: Yes, they're out of water. They're pumping out of Folsom Lake. The pumps are at capacity. They're antiquated. The rafters almost singlehandedly killed the SOFAR [South Fork of the American River] project. So now we're trying

to revive the body and breathe some water into it.

SENEY: Let me, if I can direct us back to the legislature and your beginnings in the legislature. You take the oath of office in January of 1965 to begin your legislative career. And I'd like you to describe for me what that was like to start out in the legislature.

CHAPPIE: Well, in those days the legislature was a fun-loving body. It was really neat, and it's kind of sad to look back on it now. Maybe that comes with age. But any rate, Jesse Unruh was the speaker. And so you go through gandy-dance. You're invited down to meet with the speaker. I'll never forget he was furious that I'd gotten elected--Pat Brown took it in pretty good stead. [Laughter] I don't think he cared much--and he [Speaker Unruh] said, "Ah, damnit, I gotta thank the CDC [California Democratic Council] for electing you." And I said, "What the hell is the CDC?" You know, well, I learned ultimately.

SENEY: The California Democratic Council . . .

CHAPPIE: Yes, yes. So he said, "Well, you know, by God, you are going to do a little penance. You're going to have to be [Assemblywoman] Pauline [L.]

Davis' seatmate." Well, hell, it didn't bother me any. I'd known Pauline for a long time.

SENEY: Jesse tells you this? The speaker tells you . . .

CHAPPIE: Oh, yes, yes. That's almost verbatim. And then subsequent to that, why--I think its changed now--you were summoned to meet the governor. And old Frank Mesple played the pig picker. He was the governor's hired gun, great guy. So he called one day and said, "Gino, it's time to come down and see Pat." I said, "OK." So I dressed up and went down there. And he had this desk, Jesus Christ, it was huge. And I got there a little early, and Frank and I were kind of chatting. The governor comes wandering in, a little bit sheepish, found out who I was. And so there's a lack of conversation, shake the hand, "How are you?" "Fine, fine." "Well," he said, "where did you go to college?" "Hard knocks."

[Laughter] He turned to Mesple and said, "Frank, I never heard of Howard Knox College." And Frank, God love him, said, "Pat, you dumb shit, that's hard knocks. K-N-O-C-K-S."

[Laughter] I recounted that to Pat when we roasted him at Saints and Sinners some years later. And he laughed and said, "Yeah, hard

knocks." [Laughter] That set us off in great stead. But I got along with Pat. I got along with Jesse. I was the only Republican chairman in his regime.

SENEY: You chaired the Social Welfare Committee.

CHAPPIE: Yes, yes. [Laughter]

SENEY: Now that strikes me as odd.

CHAPPIE: [Laughter] Well, it struck many people as odd.

SENEY: Did you express an interest in that committee?

CHAPPIE: Yes, yes. I was going to revamp--and ultimately by indirection I did--the welfare system in California. I had railed against it as a supervisor. The waste. The fifty-eight welfare departments [one for each county] in the state. No direction. So I asked to be assigned to the welfare committee when I got elected. And we had some real characters. We had [Assemblyman Robert E.] Bob Badham, [Assemblyman] John [L.] Burton, and [Assemblyman] John [J.] Miller, the black who became a judge. [Assemblyman Edward E.] Eddie Elliott, who was a nervous Nellie--he couldn't find his ass with two sets of earphones--he chaired the committee. He wouldn't go to the bathroom without taking a vote. So, and then we had [Assemblyman John G.] Jack Veneman. I mean

we were all over, everybody. There was continual warfare.

Well, when Eddie Elliott retired, new session [started], Jesse called me in one day. He said, "Gino, I got to make some changes in the welfare committee." . .

SENEY: . . . This was 1966 . . .

CHAPPIE: Yes. And so I said, "OK, what's the quid?" He said, "Nothing. I can't have John Burton cause he's a bomb thrower, and I can't have John Miller because he's crazy. I've got to have someone who is kind of moderate and that the committee will get along with."

I said, "OK, what are the conditions?" He said, "The only condition is, you should take Tom Joe with you." Tom Joe was a blind Korean consultant. He is like a son to me now.

So I said, "OK, no sweat," and I took the committee. I used to walk Hunter's Point and North Beach in the dark with that blind cat, going to the churches, talking to the welfare recipients. There was a big black woman who was the leader of that brigade. And the first damn meeting they come in and start lying on the floors. So I just adjourned the meeting and said--I can't remember her name--"I want to talk

to you." I took her in my office and I said, "Look, I'm Italian. I don't get mad, I get even. And I don't like games. Now if you want to deal one on one with me, I know what your problems are, and I'll work with you. But I ain't going to kiss your butt. But I'm honest. If you want to play that kind of game, I'm with you, and I'll go to bat for you when you're right and when you're wrong, you ain't got me."

"Well, I'm going to talk to my folks." So I guess she went back to the tabernacle, and next meeting she said, "OK, we cut a deal." And I want to tell you, my friend, she stuck to it. We brought back some semblance of order. They quit demonstrating. They knew they could talk to me any time they wanted. We laid out some rules of the game, and it ended up I was kind of their champion. We developed a real respect. And ultimately, when [Assemblyman Robert] Moretti was the speaker, I got my welfare reforms.<sup>1</sup> I lead [Governor] Ronald Reagan into it by indirection. So it was an interesting part of my stay in the legislature.

SENEY: What was the substance of the welfare reforms?

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<sup>1</sup>A.B. 210, 1967-1968. Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 1369 (1968).

CHAPPIE: You know this was during that period when you got your money from the state, but the county administered it. So you had fifty-eight different welfare programs in the state. Orange County didn't have a welfare program. So if you got poor in Orange County, you looked around to see which county had the best [Laughter] system, or you could cheat the most. It was just rampant. Geez, case workers were untrained. You had no records. People were stealing us blind. And so we tried to negotiate some of those things out. We got some bills passed that kind of tightened things up. Because that was [Assemblyman A. Phillip] Phil Burton's A.B. 58<sup>1</sup> that just opened the treasury, wide open. So we had to kind of bring some order.

SENEY: What did A.B. 58 do to open the treasury?

CHAPPIE: They appointed that woman who was the welfare czar. And she wasn't really responsible to anyone. I can't remember what the hell her name was. I think it was [Myrtle] Williams. We just got into a chaotic situation that you could not believe. So with some compromises on the welfare committee, we kind of began to establish some

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<sup>1</sup>A.B. 58, 1963-1964, Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 43 (1963).

rules that all the counties would have to abide by, so there was some uniformity in terms of what you could garner if you were really needy.

SENEY: Up to this point each county could set their own standards and draw from the state treasury to fund those standards?

CHAPPIE: Yes. And I was heavily involved in this county [El Dorado] and some of the crap went on you couldn't believe. And oft times if you were really needy, you got turned away. But not if you knew how to cheat and work the system. That was the era when you heard the story of the gal with fifteen illegitimate kids driving the pink Cadillac down to the welfare department to pick up her check, and, in some instances, that was true. They really manipulated the system.

So slowly we got through to the folks and said, "OK, we are going to have to reorganize things. You are going to have to help us and we won't screw you over." We did some pretty interesting things. Then ultimately with Moretti we got our reforms.

SENEY: What was the substance of that reform?

CHAPPIE: Reagan kept shouting that everybody on welfare was a fraud and a cheat. Then one day I said to Tom Joe, "Goddammit, do a study and find out."



We found out that the cheat factor at this point--now Reagan is governor--the cheat factor is somewhere between .9 and 1 percent. That's the degree to which we had eliminated a lot of this stealing and cheating and carrying on. And so I just went to the media and said, "Reagan is wrong. He doesn't know what the hell he's talking about." Oh, geez, he called me. You talk about going to the woodshed. I said, "Ron, you're wrong, goddammit, and here's the proof. You're going to have egg on your face."

Well, he settled down. [Aides to Governor Ronald Reagan] Mike Deavor, Ed Meese, and Bill Clark said, "OK, now what are we going to do?" And I said, "Well, Moretti has got some good ideas, the [Assembly] Welfare Committee has got some good ideas, I think there's a chance here for the governor to come out as a goddamn hero. Sit down with that "wop" and talk to him, and negotiate. We started . . ."

SENEY: . . . You mean Moretti.

CHAPPIE: Yes. We started the dialogue. It took about six months. We eliminated 400,000 people of the rolls that really weren't entitled to be there. They were just milking the system. [We] ended up with the first welfare program in the entire

nation that had a cost of living tied to it, and that was very definitive in terms of what the counties had to do. We set in motion the machinery that ultimately led to the state taking over the entire welfare package, where we always felt that it rightfully belonged.

SENEY: So now you have a program that the counties still administer, funded by the state, with the state determining the rules of eligibility.

CHAPPIE: And they [the state] also set the requirements for employment as a welfare employee so that you have uniformity of standards statewide.

SENEY: You mean the welfare workers now . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . That's right . . .

SENEY: . . . are standardized.

CHAPPIE: That's right. That's right. They are all under the state personnel merit system. It works. It works. We saved, Jesus, we saved millions of dollars.

SENEY: I think this was probably a fairly tough assignment.

CHAPPIE: It was fun. And then as our parting . . .

SENEY: . . . You are smiling very broadly as you say that. I mean, but it was a tough assignment, am I right . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Oh, yes. But . . .

SENEY: . . . You say it was fun, but . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . But the fun of it was I had guys like John Burton, and people who virtually hated Reagan, saying, "Well, goddamnit, he's trying. We got to work with him." It was really neat the way it came together. I have got to tell you one funny part of it. I became and ultimately I carried the first legislation in California to eliminate architectural barriers, that's why I serve for the president now on the ATBCB. That's the Architectural Transportation Barriers Control Board. Heavy, heavy. But I really got involved in the problems of the blind with Tom Joe, you know. We used to have some great times. He used to like to run his stick up girls' legs in the elevator, you know. [Laughter] He'd trip people. We'd walk up to an elevator shaft--or the elevators--and there would be a bunch of little old women standing around, and we'd put on a little show. I'd say, "Look, son, if you don't behave I'm going to find an empty elevator shaft and drop you in it." And he'd say, "Ohhh." We had more fun.

We discovered Guide Dogs for the Blind were generally working for--and they were people on welfare in effect--the blind program. So one day

CHAPPIE: John Burton came in and said, "Goddamnit, Gino," he said, "We got to do something to feed those dogs." So I put a little bill together, and [Laughter] we got eighteen dollars a month for Guide Dogs for doggie bonbons. I mean that created a fuss you couldn't believe. Reagan called me down. I said, "Goddamnit, Ron, you know, this is motherhood and apple pie. I mean if you are going to come down on those . . . ." He was going to veto the bill. Why it was a pinchy shit. you know. Not that many guide dogs in the state. Well, any rate, he signed the bill and then in his last term, the last year, John Burton come by and he says, "Gino, we got to have some fun with Ron." And I said, "Uh-oh, here we go again." I said, "What do you want?" He said, "By God, you know the cost of living has gone up since Reagan has been governor." He said, "Those poor dogs are probably getting hungry again." So we [Laughter] put a bill together and doubled it to thirty-six dollars. [Laughter] Reagan went into orbit but he signed the bill.<sup>1</sup> I got to know him quite well in that period.

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<sup>1</sup>A.B. 1203, 1977 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 1206 (1977).

SENEY: Did you find Governor Reagan to be fairly open-minded and responsive when you made your case to him about these kinds of things?

CHAPPIE: Once you convinced him that there was no Machiavellian scheme, and the Democrats weren't trying to manipulate him, he was cool. He had a real--it was surprising to a lot of people--grasp for government. Now whether he learned it in his negotiations with the unions or evicting the communists or whatever, the only thing he didn't understand was reapportionment which we'll get into later today. I get semi-emotional over that.

SENEY: Yes, let's save that. This welfare business is interesting because as I went over the papers<sup>1</sup> that you provided me with and other sources of materials, this really stood out as something I would not have expected any legislator from the rural and mountain counties to become so heavily involved in. I'll go back to Jesse Unruh. You have described some of his motivation, that the other members of the committee were not suitable from his point of view . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Yeah . . .

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<sup>1</sup>Eugene A. Chappie Papers, California State Archives, Sacramento, California.

SENEY: . . . as committee chairmen.

CHAPPIE: He was afraid of them.

SENEY: Do you think maybe he had in mind, too, that as a Republican you might be better able to deal with Governor Reagan because at this point Reagan had been elected?

CHAPPIE: That may have been the case. Maybe he was far more discerning than I thought. I never give that a thought. That may well have been part of his [thinking] . . .

SENEY: Because Jesse was in your term very discerning, wasn't he?

CHAPPIE: Oh, yes.

SENEY: His political antennae were well developed . . .

CHAPPIE: Well developed. A very intelligent guy. Great politician.

SENEY: Talk about him a little. Tell me about him from your point of view.

CHAPPIE: I only had one encounter with him. We got into a--I can't remember everything about the incident--there was some super important bill, and we got hung up on a call of the house, and I wouldn't shake loose. I was sitting at my desk and. . . . Jesse did have fits of temper. He could just go into a rage, and he could get physical too. In this case he walked up to me,

and said, "You son-of-a-bitch." I said, "Now, Mr. Speaker, call me what you will but leave my mother out of it, or I'm going to bust your goddamn face." Jesse, in those days was. . . . I didn't know how else to respond.

SENEY: He was huge you mean . . .

CHAPPIE: Oh, he was. That was when he was "Big Daddy". I just said, "You leave my mother out of this." And it took him aback. I guess he had never thought, you know, to figure that phrase out. He walked away, and this was early on, and after the issue had been settled, he came by and he said, "Gino, I'm sorry. I apologize." And I think that showed him that I wasn't going to kiss his ass. From there on we were great friends. I had entree to his office anytime. He did me some favors for my district.

SENEY: What sort of things?

CHAPPIE: Lot of times, you know, I carried legislation that I didn't understand. Little problems, an obscure water district or little utility district, had one in Mammoth Lake one time. Or my kiwi bills. [Concerning] non-resident water districts<sup>1</sup> where the voters could vote from Saudi Arabia, or whatever. [Senator] Alan

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<sup>1</sup> A.B. 754, 1968-1969 Reg. Sess. (1968).

Sieroty used to just go into orbit when I would bring some of these things in. We needed them for a particular community. They were unique so you would have to have a special chapter. You know, it was not unusual for me to introduce one hundred bills; with eleven counties, eight or ten bills per county. And oft times I would run into obstacles in the committee, and Jesse would call the chair and say, "Goddamn it, leave the "wop" alone. He's OK, you can trust him." Those things are important. And once in a while you'd have to kind of tack a little amendment on in conference committee, but hell, you're just serving people. Mammoth Lake was an example. If you, for example, had a single family dwelling, and you're on propane, and you had the tank in your back yard, you paid six cents a gallon in sales tax.<sup>1</sup>

[End Tape 2, Side A]

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<sup>1</sup>A.B. 149, 1977-1978, Reg. Sess. (1977).



[Session 2, April 3, 1990]

[Tape 3, Side A]

SENEY: We talked last time about the social welfare committee and your service there. What other committees were you assigned to when you first started in the legislature in 1965?

CHAPPIE: The other committee was local government. I had eleven counties in the district, and I served on local government until actually the day I left the legislature. I also had the water committee. I think those were the three principal committees I had at the time.

SENEY: In one of your newsletters you made available to me, you complained about committee assignments to your constituents indicating to them that there were frequent times when there would be two committees meeting simultaneously and you had difficulty in juggling them and keeping up with them. I take it you considered that a problem or you wouldn't have discussed it with your constituents.

CHAPPIE: Right. I think the effort was to attempt to point out that oft times the legislator was not

CHAPPIE: in attendance at a particular meeting, committee hearing, when a number of his constituents could have been there in attendance, and you were right across the hall or down two floors attending another one that perhaps you had to present a bill to at that particular time. I know that at one time there were two rather important committees--as memory serves; one was governmental organization and the other was county government. They met the same day at the same time. It was always on Tuesday at 1:30 P.M. I had that branded. I spent half the afternoon scurrying from one committee to another. Fortunately, they were just around the corner on the same floor. But it did create some real problems. When I finally got on Ways and Means [Committee], you had a number of subcommittees. Particularly, when you were dealing with the budget, and you were all over the place. There was kind of a courtesy rule, and perhaps it's still there, that put a call on the committee, and either your AA [administrative assistant] or one of your secretaries would be in attendance, and when a key vote was imminent, why they would come galloping down the hall and pull you out of the other committee. So it was really a

scramble. I didn't find it that bad in [the] Congress [of the United States]. Fortunately, things work slower there. But the assembly, at times, gets rather frenetic.

SENEY: Those were three good committees for a freshman. How do you account for such good assignments from Democratic leadership? Or let me back up here, were the committee assignments made by Jesse Unruh, as the speaker on the Republican side, or did your caucus divide up the committees among the Republican members?

CHAPPIE: In those days our numbers were so small that the Republican leadership, quote unquote, really didn't have much input. Over the years it developed. Now I think it has gone in the other direction because there is a lot of internal politics in the caucus so that, you know, you go to extremes in that process. But at that time, gee, I think there were something like twenty-seven on the Republican side. And there was a little internal fighting as usual in our leadership. That's when [Assemblyman Bob] Monagan, [Assemblyman William T.] Bagley and [Assemblyman John G.] Veneman, the young Turks, were trying to get away from the old right-wing conservative approach. I think perhaps Jesse

gave me those appointments, one because of the size of the district. I didn't really cut him during the campaign. There were a lot of people that really took him on as their principal opponent. You know, Big Daddy and that whole bit. And I just tried to talk to the issues, and what experience I'd had in county government, and so we had a fairly good relationship. But I think that's what attributed to the appointments.

SENEY: Going back to Assemblyman Monagan. He was elected the year you came to the legislature as minority leader. He replaced [Assemblyman Joseph C.] Joe Shell.

CHAPPIE: That's right.

SENEY: Were you part of that . . .

CHAPPIE: No. No . . .

SENEY: . . . movement to replace Joe Shell?

CHAPPIE: That had taken place prior to my appearing on the scene. So I wasn't part of that. I know that Joe was quite bitter for a long, long time. Even when he went into the ranks of the lobbyists, he still carried some bad feelings over that. But then again I think Joe was a little bit too far to the right, and it just wasn't right for the time.

SENEY: He had opposed [Richard M.] Nixon in 1962 in the Republican primary for governor . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Right . . .

SENEY: . . . and apparently desired to run again for governor in 1966.

CHAPPIE: Yes.

SENEY: Did he run again for governor?

CHAPPIE: As memory serves, he did not.

SENEY: What's your evaluation of Assemblyman Monagan?

CHAPPIE: I've great respect for Bob. He wasn't a bomb thrower; he spoke to the issues, and he had some good lieutenants. Bagley was very, very articulate; Veneman, and then of course we had guys who . . .

SENEY: . . . [Assemblyman] Houston [I.] Flournoy . . .

CHAPPIE: Yes, Hugh Flournoy. You see, they were the more moderate, if you want to apply labels, Republican type. And we still had, oh Lord, we still had [Assemblyman Charles J.] Charlie Conrad and [Assemblyman E. Richard] Captain Barnes and [Assemblyman John L.E.] Bud Collier from Whitumca. They were pretty much to the right of most of us, and we had the games that went on in caucus. On the day we were able to elect Monagan as speaker, Bud Collier was out on the golf course. He was just having a hard time voting

for Monagan. We had a call of the house on there for half the morning. Finally we sent the sergeant-of-arms out to gather him up and bring him in and cast his vote.

SENEY: Well, you only had forty-one votes.

CHAPPIE: That's [Laughter] right. Absolutely.

SENEY: Well, this was kind of a period of crisis-- identity crisis--for the Republican party . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Right . . .

SENEY: . . . as it began to shift from the kind of [Governor] Earl Warren, [Governor] Goodwin [J.] Knight, [Senator] Thomas [H.] Kuchel, the more moderate Republican party, to the kind of Ronald Reagan conservative Republican party.

CHAPPIE: Well, the influence of Orange County and some of that element, they had quite a group in the caucus. It was really some pretty heated conversation that went on in caucus in terms of what direction the caucus should take, but Monagan was a good leader. The only criticism I have of Bob, and I still needle him about it, was that when he became speaker, he asked me if I would chair the Rules Committee. And I said, "No. One, I have a large district, and I've seen that where people neglect their district, it cost them." He came around the second time. I said,

"Bob, I don't want to." The third time he sat me down in my office and said, "Are you a team player?" And I said, "Yes, sir." And he said, "OK, damn it, you're the chairman of Rules." The first crack out of the box, I said, "Bob, there's some real, real crazies around here in the committees--consultants, staff aides and all that stuff." I said, "As far as I'm concerned, we've got to clean house." "Well", he said, "You know we're the good guys, the white hats, we can't do that. We've got to keep some of them or we'll be accused of the same thing as the Democrats." I said, "Bob, if you don't do it, they're going to eat you alive." Well, in two years, they ate him because they stayed in there internally and just churned him. It was sad because I had and still have great respect for Monagan.

SENEY: You know, he has made statements in an interview that he had hoped that the staff system would evolve where the committee counsels and committee staff would be a non-partisan staff so you could change majorities, you could change speakers, and so forth, and you wouldn't need to change the staffs. And he has acknowledged that it was a mistake . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Yes . . .

SENEY: . . . That he realizes now he should have made those kinds of staff changes that apparently you suggested to him.

CHAPPIE: That's when I coined the great phrase, G-G-S. Good government shit. [Laughter] It doesn't work in the real world of politics.

SENEY: As long as we are talking about the Rules Committee, Monagan said he looked for two things in the Rules Committee chair, loyalty and hard work, because it was a committee which met apparently virtually every day . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Oh, yes. Yes . . .

SENEY: . . . And there was a good deal of work to be done. Now I want to start by asking you about something that played in the press. Since you are smiling, you know what it's going to be. I want to ask you about your ban on miniskirts in the state capitol as chairman of the Rules Committee, tell me about that.

CHAPPIE: [Laughter] Well, it's funny how [Laughter] circumstances will get one in hot water or provide a lot of fun. When I first took over Rules, [Assemblyman] Joe [A.] Gonsalves was chairman, just a sweet guy. We're great friends. And I got to digging around trying to find out where all the bodies were. The chairman of the



Rules at that time had about 3,000 employees,  
when you look at the administration of the house

. . .

SENEY: . . . When you say looking around, digging for  
bodies, what do you mean by that?

CHAPPIE: There were a lot of things. I listen a lot in  
spite of all the talking I'm doing here. You sit  
down in the coffee shop, and you talk to a  
sergeant [at-arms]. I always found if you talk  
to the working troops, the guys with the picks  
and shovels, the guys that parked our cars in the  
basement, the janitors, the sergeant-at-arms, the  
women--they were young gals in the messenger  
pool--you really get a feel for what's going on  
internally. There's no secrets. "There's no  
place to hide down here," said the Devil.

I discovered--I hope you will treat it  
lightly--that Jesse Unruh was using the messenger  
pool as his private stable. I mean these gals  
were. . . . It was sad really. I'm not a  
Puritan, for Christ's sake, but nonetheless, I  
have strong feelings about government and feel  
there has to be some dignity and some "decorum."  
After all, we are the servant of the people.  
That's a pretty hallowed place down there. I  
found, in effect, he was running a stable of

CHAPPIE: women in the damn messenger pool. So I got to poking around, and this was the year of the miniskirts and some of them, I mean, were about as wide as your belt. So I, one afternoon, called all the young women down into my office and said, "Hey, we have a responsibility around here. We pay pretty well, and I have a little problem with your attire. I'm just suggesting that we kind of shape up. I don't like the appearance of things. There's a lot of conversation around the halls. It doesn't speak well for any of us." Well, there were a couple of them in there that were real hard cases.

A few days later one of them comes to work with a miniskirt about eight inches long and nothing under it. Well, they got where they'd bend over the drinking fountains, and, I mean, everything would stop in the corridors. It was incredible. So just as Fate would have it, it was a Friday afternoon, and it's always a quiet press day and the media is milling around, and I just finally got pissed. I mean they were flaunting it in my face. And I issued a decree that said henceforth there would be no more miniskirts. Then the media picked up on it and you couldn't believe. Christ!

Then somewhere at a point in time, they said, "How are you going to correct the problem?" I said, "Well, either the skirts will have to get longer or we will have to raise the drinking fountains in the corridors." That started another circle, and then the media drove all the way up to Cool to film my wife and three daughters and whether their knees were showing, and I got letters in the mail from all over the world. You couldn't believe. God dang. One of the gals filed suit. It was sad. One little black gal, caught her carrying a pistol around the damn halls. It was totally out of hand. So I gained instant notoriety and people would mail me rulers to measure skirts. It was fun. To this day, people will say, "And there's the no-good so-and-so that banned all the miniskirts." [Laughter] It's interesting when Monagan was deposed, I suggested I was going to issue smocks for all the messengers. John Burton succeeded me as chairman of the Rules and jeans became popular so all at once the miniskirts vanished, and they're all walking around like a bunch of slobs with damn jeans, you know. We come and we go.

SENEY: [Laughter] Well, it did get a lot of press play.

CHAPPIE: . . . Oh, man, I tell you . . .

SENEY: . . . The files are full of it. Day after day.

CHAPPIE: . . . [Laughter] "The old grouch", they called me, I think.

SENEY: Let me ask you about some more substantive things . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Yes. [Laughter] . . .

SENEY: . . . About the Rules committee. Could you tell me what were the more substantive kinds of changes that you made as Rules Committee chairman? First of all, if you could maybe describe what went on in these numerous meetings and the kinds of problems you dealt with, and then some of the substantive things that were done.

CHAPPIE: You know, looking back, there's a crisis about every fifteen minutes; and there's always an uproar over some rule or some bill, and two days later no one can seem to remember what the hell it was all about. We spent a lot of our time keeping members out of mischief. We had one guy, for example, in his divorce settlement he gave his leased car to his wife who drove it to Kansas City, Missouri. I mean, that type of stuff. Instances of guys shacking up with gals and having the sergeants take their laundry--their women friend's laundry--to the laundry. And that

type of stuff. The press was always there because they knew that there were bad things going on, and oft times a lot of our meetings were in closed session [dealing with] personnel, and often we deviated from the purpose of the meeting. You watch the flow of bills. I never sensed that we did such earthshaking things. You know, really, it was more of a housekeeping thing.

SENEY: At this point the Rules Committee was a housekeeping committee rather than a substantive bill killing committee that . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Right. That bill-killing process came mostly with [Assemblyman] Leo [T.] McCarthy. It got pretty grim. I'd say we devoted 50 percent of our time--members coming in wanting another phone, or because of a special problem in their district they needed another staff member that was outside of their staff authorization, another district office, or legislative newsletters. You spent a whole bunch of your time just covering those guys' butts. And it used to anger me a lot of times because, you know, again I'm not a "purie," but some of those guys would dig themselves holes you couldn't believe. It was just incredible. So you spent a lot of your time

CHAPPIE: just trying to cover shit. Like when [Assemblyman Ken] Kenny Meade, he had this big Blazer or Bronco that he had bought before he and his wife split up, and they liked to go up to the snow on the weekends so that was his ski buggy. At the time we were allotted \$250 a month for our lease car and anything in excess of that you paid out of your own pocket. Well, during the settlement he gave her the car. So finally, the media was getting pretty insistent. And we called him in and I said to him, "Kenny, listen, Kenny, how in the name of thunder, can you justify this?" Then he give me hell for moralizing. So my response was, "I'll tell you what, friend, you have two days to get that car back or I'll put your ass in jail." So he flew to Kansas City and drove the car home. And then on the way home he got caught doing 100 miles an hour and that made things much better. But you can't believe the time we devoted to that as opposed to substantive things; you know, how can we make the house run more efficiently, how can we spend less money. It was an incredible experience. So I never sensed that we did anything that was of major significance or consequence during the time I was on that

committee, and I served on it a good period of time. Then later on it got very, very, very political. Of course, we had the rule of one at that time, where any one member of the Rules Committee could withhold action on a bill, and that would, in effect, kill it. And sometimes, thank God we had that rule . . .

SENEY: . . . You had it during time you were on the Rules . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Yes . . .

SENEY: . . . Committee. Membership was elected at that time . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Right . . .

SENEY: Three from the Republican side, three from the Democratic side. You were the chair . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . That's right; the majority had the key, the swing vote.

SENEY: Could you always depend upon your Republican colleagues to go along with you? Did you have any problems in that regard?

CHAPPIE: 99 percent of the time. I had one problem with Monagan, and we resolved that. I hadn't been on it for a month, and we start getting these messages from on high". This is what you should be doing on this or that, or this bill or that." And I just gathered up the other three guys one

day and marched into Monagan's office, and I said, "Look, Robert, I didn't ask for this goddamn job. If you want to run the Rules Committee, why don't you just get rid of us, and we can go back to tending our districts, and you can be the Rules chairman. Otherwise, we don't want any part of it." I mean we were in total accord.

And Bob says, "OK, Gino, I got the message." From that day he never bothered us, which was good. I think we had, whatever we were doing, I think we had a better ability to do the job and objectively. Yes, it was no big thing. I think in terms of helping the process, one could do much more as a chairman of a standing committee, policy committee.

SENEY: This must have taken pretty much all your time?

CHAPPIE: It reflected in the next election. I dropped 10 percent in the polls. I wasn't able to go to Death Valley and [Laughter] all those places to stroke the [Laughter] folks.

SENEY: You know, speaking of stroking the folks, one of the things you mentioned in your newsletter is going to the county fairs. There were nine. There were combinations; eleven counties ended up with nine fairs. These are wonderful



institutions in communities. From a political point of view, could you tell me what they were like? They must have been mandatory attendance, I would think, for you.

CHAPPIE: Some legislators just avoided them like the plague. I ended up with fourteen fairs finally. And it was a part of my political budget. I budgeted every year from \$10,000 to \$18,000. I was a 4-H leader a long time ago, right after the war. And being in agriculture, really had great feelings for 4-H and FFA [Future Farmers of America] and some of the ROP [Regional Occupation Program] programs that were just developing . . .

SENEY: . . . ROP is . . .

CHAPPIE: It was Smith-Hughes when I went to school. It's shop, occupational training. I don't know what the hell the acronym stands for any more. I just developed quite a reputation for going to those fairs, and I always worked the Junior Livestock auction. I worked in the ring with the auctioneer. You got great visibility. You can spend all kinds of money campaigning and spending in campaign advertising, but when you buy the Grand Champion lamb with this clean, young American boy or girl and this shiny lamb, or this steer or this prize hog, you get half a page in

the paper for free. But more importantly, those programs, I think, teach some great traits; work ethic, responsibility, how to get along with people, how to compete. So it was fun, but it was a grind. Most of those were three day affairs. You would have to go to the buyer's breakfast, so you would be out there staggering around at five o'clock in the morning with all those kids milling around getting their animals ready. It was just great.

Even when I was in [the United States House of Representatives] congress, I had fourteen fairs, and I worked every one of them. I used to fly all over hell; some days I would have two fairs in one day. I really enjoyed it. Auctions kind of get me cranking. When you are in the ring, you can play one bidder against the other. Then a lot of times I would be in there bidding for myself, jacking these other guys up. It's a great, great experience.

SENEY: And you also made available to me your newsletters which you sent to a list of people including the newspapers in the district.<sup>1</sup> How were these prepared?

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<sup>1</sup>Eugene A. Chappie Papers.

CHAPPIE: In my first campaign I was in the original CAL plan. [It was started by] Gaylord Parkinson, and was patterned after the Colorado LOVE plan where we planned to take over the assembly. We did it two years early. Hell, I didn't have any money. I was trying to pay the mortgage on the ranch. So all at once, Parkinson shows up at Cool and says, "You like to be a CAL plan [candidate]?" I says, "Whatever that is count me in." So they provided the staff guy, and I scrounged up a few bucks and went out . . .

SENEY: . . . This was after the primary.

CHAPPIE: Yes, oh yes, obviously. And I ran on to this kid in Sacramento; I'd been scrounging around looking for a campaign manager, and I ran on to good old Carl Schneitz. He was hidden away in a little old cubicle down there in town, and we hired him for \$1,200 to run the whole campaign. Then I got to scrounging for money because we realized that because of the Democrat registration, we were going to have a problem. So I hammered on the CAL plan. They said, "Oh, yeah. A piece of cake. The budget is going to be about 14,000 bucks." We had gathered up and I had spent about \$2,000. They said, "The check's in the mail. Spend it [the \$12,000]." So I went out and spent it, and

I'm still waiting for the check. So I went back and remortgaged the ranch. That's when I learned my first lesson. Never spend your own money.

Carl was good with words, and he had run a number of council campaigns in Sacramento. He put together a little newspaper that we put out as a last minute mailer in the district. It was very, very effective. So I won the election, and I put him on staff, and he stayed with me for sixteen years. He was good with words. He kept up with the issues. We worked very closely together. I had a very small staff. I never did have a district office until the last two terms, I guess, in the legislature. We just kind of flew by the seat of our pants. He had a way with newsletters.

SENEY: Speaking of district offices, your predecessor [Assemblyman] Paul [J.] Lunardi said he never had one either because if he'd put one one place he would have had to fight with everyone else.

CHAPPIE: You could piece them off that way. You know, district offices are a pain in the butt. The only reason that you can justify them is the fact that you are doing some damn department head's job that failed. I found that in congress. We spent all of our time picking up the pieces after

Vets Administration [Department of Veteran Affairs], HUD [Department of Housing and Urban Development], you name it, where the damn bureaucracy wouldn't work. So you create another bureaucracy to correct the mistakes. The tack that we both used was the guy in Bishop would say, "How come we don't have it?" And I'd say, "Geez, the guys at Tahoe want one, or the people in Marysville will have to have a district, or Placerville or Nevada City, or Calaveras. So if you got problems, call us." It was a lot simpler that way too.

SENEY: How did you deal with the press in your district? Did you pay particular attention to them?

CHAPPIE: They paid enough attention to me. I was always popping off and having fun, stirring a little controversy. We went to a lot of Clampers [E Clampus Vitus]<sup>1</sup> things. We just tried to stay visible. I think I got along well with the media because I never jerked them around, never lied to them. A lot of them would say, "Goddamnit, we disagree with you, but at least you are honest." So I felt good in that respect. Even to this day I think I have fair rapport with the press. When I think they are jacking me

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<sup>1</sup>A California historical organization.

around, I tell them. So I had great rapport with the press.

SENEY: Well, you gave me files that contained quite a number of press releases.<sup>1</sup> You obviously paid attention to . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . oh, absolutely, absolutely. And the response I think was good. We didn't flood them with press releases. Some of these guys every fifteen minutes would put out a press release. Our attitude was if you got something important to say, say it, and they'll treat it accordingly. Over the years, any number of them would say, "My waste basket is full of that crap. I can't be bothered with it." So we tried to learn.

SENEY: One of the things that happened just as you entered the legislature was that the Supreme Court decided that the Senate districts in California were unconstitutional<sup>2</sup>.

CHAPPIE: . . . One man, one vote. [Chief Justice] Earl Warren, God rest him. That really screwed things up for northern California.

[End of Tape 3, Side A]

[Begin Tape 3, Side B]

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<sup>1</sup>Eugene A. Chappie Papers.

<sup>2</sup>Reynolds v. Simms (377 U.S. 533 [1964]).

CHAPPIE: The effect of that was devastating because up to that point, we were able to share the work load. After we lost those senators, they dumped it all on us. So I ended up with a piece of one senator as opposed to having three. So we had to crank up to try and accommodate the work load.

SENEY: Was that a difficult matter to get through the legislature, or did the fact the Democrats controlled both houses and the governorship meant that that senate reapportionment districting plan was pretty much a Democratic plan?

CHAPPIE: Oh, yes. Oh, yes, yes. It was [Governor Edmund G.] Pat Brown took care of all these boys. Some of them are still superior court judges.  
[Laughter]

SENEY: You mean these are the ones who had to leave [lost through districts]?

CHAPPIE: . . . Had to leave, yes. It was interesting. [Senator Joseph A.] Rattigan and [Senator Edwin J.] Eddie Regan, there was a whole gaggle of them. Those were interesting times. Impeach Warren billboards. Yes.

SENEY: What is your general view of that reapportionment decision as it affected the senate? How do you feel about that?

CHAPPIE: Well, if you really believe in one man, one vote philosophy, then I feel strongly, and I felt and still do, that we should reapportion the U. S. Senate. Then you give California eight or ten U. S. Senators and we'd have a fair shake in the process, you know. And give all the little states one senator as we do in the House of Representatives. Unfortunately, that's not the case. So there are some inequities in the system, and you learn to live with it. Yes, the mountain counties really got hurt over that.

SENEY: Do you think the senate reapportionment in California worked to the obvious detriment of northern California?

CHAPPIE: Very definitely. Very definitely. That was the real check and balance in the system at that time. You know, there is a lot of garbage that goes on in the assembly, and a lot of the stuff you would say, "Well, hell, the votes are here, forget it, why fight it. Don't waste time; get over to the senate, and they'll kill it." They were a pretty responsible group. You didn't have that knife throwing partisan thing that we have now. I felt they did a very responsible job; [Senator] George Miller [Jr.] and [Senator] Hugh [M.] Burns and those guys. They had a--I don't



know what--a camaraderie, I guess is the best way to describe it. And they worked things out very well. It's a little different now. C'est la vie.

SENEY: Let me ask you about some of the legislation that you sponsored when you first entered the legislature. You were good enough in your newsletters to provide summaries of the legislation you introduced. One of the things that comes back over and over again and something that Governor Brown vetoed was the Folsom Lake bridge.<sup>1</sup>

CHAPPIE: Rattlesnake bridge. Yes. That was a long war. I started that war in federal court when I was still here on the board. That was one of the remnants of the construction of Folsom Dam which I opposed, incidentally. Environmental killer like me opposing the dam because it took some of the best agricultural land out of this entire county. We won a quarter of a million dollars, which was a lot of money at that time, from the [U.S.] Corps of Engineers and the [U.S.] Bureau of Reclamation. So then I had that money put in a special trust fund here in the county treasury. It was held pretty sacred. It ultimately

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<sup>1</sup>A.B. 1160, 1965-1966, Reg. Sess. (1965).

disappeared after I was gone for a while but it was called the Rattlesnake Bridge Fund. So when I got in the legislature, I said, "What the hell, you know, there is some seed money in El Dorado County, and we can use that for chum," and I really worked hard on that dang bill. It was a key link between El Dorado and Placer County and were it in existence now, I mean, it would have resolved a lot of the problems that have developed attendant to non-existent Auburn Dam. Highway 49 floods every time we get a good storm, and had we been able to construct that bridge, it would have been another good alternate to the Placer County side. Yes, I worked hard on that bill, and I got it to [Governor] Pat [Brown], and he bombed me. But you win some and you lose some.

SENEY: Another bill you sponsored, and this is kind of interesting, has to do with frozen meat.<sup>1</sup>

CHAPPIE: Oh, yes. The home butchering. As a rancher, I watched that industry grow. A person had ten, fifteen acres, a little patch of irrigated pasture, and you'd raise four or five steers, and you raised some for your own use. You bootlegged

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<sup>1</sup>A.B. 618, 1967-1968. Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 1449 (1967).

CHAPPIE: a few to neighbors. So they are custom slaughterers; they would have a little van with an A-frame winch on the back and a twenty-two. And when the beef was ready to be butchered, you'd give him a call, and he would come out and slaughter it and gut it out. If you wanted it, you could have the offal, and they would normally take the hide and charge you ten or fifteen bucks, and they would haul it to Joe's Meat Market. Joe would be licensed by the state to custom butcher animals. There was a prohibition against selling them commercially, obviously, because it's for home consumption. You know, the pioneer ethic.

I found in my experience that there were some of these cats that were stealing. What precipitated it was that I brought an elk and two deer into one of these guys one day and ended up short a whole deer.

I said, "One day I'll get even." And when I got in the legislature, why we did a little investigating here and there and talked to people who had been ripped off. So I introduced a bill that required a minimal certification. He had to weigh the carcass when it came in; he had to weigh the trim and the bones when it went out,

and identify how many packages of steaks and roasts and all those things, so that you had some kind of a check. You come in with--and you pare out about 55 percent if you have a good animal-- 1,000 pounds of meat, you should have 500, 550 pounds going out the door. It caused a little furor with some old redheaded heifer down in Fresno. Jesus, she was like wrath of the gods. She didn't understand the bill, and she stomped around. I got it out of the assembly; she stomped around over in the senate and cried and waved her arms. Finally, one day I caught her in the elevator, and we had a long talk. Finally, I got through to her and to her dying day she was a staunch ally after she understood. . . . She damned near killed the bill. [Laughter] The irate housewife.

SENEY: Another area that you spent some time in, in terms of legislation, was Lake Tahoe.

CHAPPIE: Oh, yes.

SENEY: There were a number of bills having to do with sewage, mandating hookups<sup>1</sup> . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . I carried the bill for total export . . .

SENEY: That's right and exporting it into Alpine County.

CHAPPIE: Lake Sweetpea, as we called it.

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<sup>1</sup>A.B. 1943, 1969-1970 Reg. Sess. (1969).

SENEY: Is that right?

CHAPPIE: Those were the days when you could really do things. [Assemblyman] Carley [V.] Porter was chair of the Water Committee. I offered to throw [Senator] Hugo Fisher off the top of Harvey's one day up there.

One day Carley said, "Well, damn it, Gino, we got to go up there and find out what we are going to do with that sewage." I said, "OK." We gathered up a high level committee, water committee, and we roared up there with a consultant, [Ronald B.] Ron Robie. And we went over into Alpine County and stomped around and looked real smart and said, "Well, here's where we're going to put it." It's pretty obvious it was the only place we could put it, and that's how we engineered the damn dam. Then we learned we were going to have to build about twenty-nine miles of pipe and finance the thing. I got them some loans, and over the years, I got the interest forgiven; and then I got a lot of the capital on the loans forgiven, too. That was a fun trip.

But you didn't have to go through all of that crap now of jumping through hoops. We had a

problem. Here were some ways to solve it and we carried the legislation.

SENEY: I take it you mean environmental impact reports.

CHAPPIE: All that stuff. We'd have never been able to do that. We had the Sahati brothers, for example; they were pouring raw sewage in the Lake. There were a lot of them. I carried the legislation to form the T-T-S-A which was the Tahoe Truckee Sanitation Agency.<sup>1</sup> I got [Assemblyman] John [T.] Knox drunk one night in the closing days of the session, and I snuck that one past him. He, as chair of the County Local Government Committee, was kind of a martinet. One day he decided that there were not going to be any more new districts formed. We had 360 some districts in the state. "By God, there's not going to be another one of those bills go through this committee."

So I went to him one day and I said, "John, we got a problem at Tahoe. We've kind of taken care of the south shore. That north shore has gone bananas. There's raw sewage going in the creeks."

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<sup>1</sup>A.B. 1749, 1971-1972 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 1560 (1971).

CHAPPIE:           He said, "I'll tell you what, Gino, I'll do what I can to save your political ass. I'll let you get the bill out of the committee, but I'll promise you when it gets to the floor, I'm going to kill it." I had learned kind of how the system works, and I got the bill out of the committee and put it on file, and I kept passing it on file. This was getting close to the end of the session. In those days, it was tumultuous. Sergeant-of-arms would lean over the balcony and stop the clock, and then you'd go for a week or two.

Knox, along with a lot of us, would go down to the local teahouse and have a few pops; those sessions were long, you know. They would lock us in; we'd sleep on the floor, and all that time nobody knew what the hell was going on. Bills were being amended in conference committees. God help the queen.

Well, I waited and waited. There had been a little party down at Frank Fats' [restaurant]. A few of the members were rather indisposed, and old "Ox" [Assemblyman Knox] come a wandering in, knocking things over. You could always tell when he was about two-thirds stiff. And he sat down at his desk and I said, "Boy, now is the time."

CHAPPIE: So I called my secretary and said, "Dotty [Dorothy Delaney], in about five minutes, I want you to call--had a bank of phones off of the floor--and make like you are a long-distance operator and tell the sergeant that you have a very important long distance call for Assemblyman Knox relative to problems in his district--he was trying to get a freeway built in his district--all I want you to do is keep on the phone for about ten minutes. Have him explain, tell him you are an irate taxpayer, have him explain in detail what the hell he is doing to your property."

Well, Dotty was pretty shrewd, she was with me for fifteen years; she was an old pro around there. We'd gone to high school together as a matter of fact.

By God, pretty soon I see John kind of wandering out of the floor. I threw my mike up and asked to have the bill read for the third time. And it just went out of there like seventy-nine to zip. To this day, I don't think Jack knows what I did to him. And that is how we got TTSA, which was a consortium of all of the little Mickey-Mouse sewer districts up there.



They export over on the other side of that part of the basin. We used to have some fun.

SENEY: You are smiling when you tell me this.

CHAPPIE: Yes, you know, what the hell, you make the system work . . .

SENEY: . . . This was one of the ways, I take it, you learned to make the system work, learning the members, knowing their weakness . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Yes . . .

SENEY: . . . in order to distract them in this case.

CHAPPIE: . . . Yes. [Assemblyman] Mike Cullen--I'm getting off the subject . . .

SENEY: . . . That's all right.

CHAPPIE: Mike Cullen, God love him, he was from San Pedro and, great guy, a Democrat. He wore a snap brim hat and smoked a damn Meerschaum pipe. There was always a cloud of smoke where ever Mike was, a very scholarly, learned type, you know. At committee [meetings he blew] clouds of smoke and ashes. I used to sit up front [in the assembly chamber], quote-unquote leadership; Joe Gonsalves and I, the "portagee" and the "wop". One day, I come back to my seat and here's a tobacco pouch. I said, "Joe, you gone to smoking, huh?"

"No, no, Gino," he says, "That damn Mike Cullen was over here and forgot his tobacco

CHAPPIE: pouch." Well, I gathered it up. I always had a little bag of horse shit in the office, people used to keep mailing it to me; you know, "This a reward for that great bill." So I walked into the office and pulled out my horse shit, and Dotty came in and she said, "What are you doing?" I said, "Well, Mr. Cullen's out of tobacco." And I took out a couple of round ones and ground them all up.

Dotty would say occasionally, "Goddamn you, you're at it again." Then she'd stomp out of the office.

Well, I filled up his tobacco pouch, went down to the floor, called the sergeant over, and I said, "Sergeant, I think Mr. Cullen has misplaced his tobacco pouch. Would you kindly put it on his desk?"

Well, Mike wasn't there. A few minutes later he comes wandering in. You could just see the wheels, "Oh, this is where I left it." He flipped the thing open, loaded up his pipe. When horse manure burns, you know it's white, like smoke coming out of the Papal chimney. And Joe Gonsalves sat there, and I thought he'd have a stroke; and Mike smoked the entire pouch. To

this day, he doesn't know. We had more fun.  
God. Enough of that.

SENEY: Tell me about your secretary.

CHAPPIE: Dorothy Delaney. I got her from [Assemblyman James L.] Jim Holmes who was an alcoholic, God rest him. He had been an assemblyman for eleven years, twelve years. He got defeated, but Dotty had in effect been the assemblyman for his area for ten years. He was generally in kind of a haze. She did all his correspondence, kind of gathered him up and sent him to committee and rode herd on his bills. And when he left, she was out of work. I had taken Lunardi's seat, and I went to Paul, and I said, "Hell, I need a secretary who knows what's going on around here because I have a lot to learn." I interviewed her and hired her on the spot. She was loyal to her dying day, God love her. She really knew the system. Right out of high school, like a lot of us, she had to go to work. She went to work as a shoe clerk somewhere and then worked for the Board of Equalization and finally got into the legislature. A year before I left she retired. I missed her. She was tough. God, she was tough.

SENEY: I take it you could trust her to handle matters.

CHAPPIE: Oh, yes. Hell, she wrote my personal checks. She was family, just a real neat, neat person. [Laughter] Her grandfather was George Phipps who founded Georgetown, among other things. So we had a lot of things going. We went to high school together. I didn't know her then, but she was the same age. Quite a gal. And she ran a tight ship. We had one of the smallest staffs in the whole capitol. Paid well; fired fast. She just used to terrorize the hell out of Carl. Then I had a guy . . .

SENEY: Carl was . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Carl Schneitz that ran my campaign. Then I had a kid named Larry Cenotto who lived in Jackson. He was my roving district office. I got dispensation from Rules Committee. I said, "If you'll give me a guy and a little mileage and a half-decent salary, why I won't stick you with a couple of district offices," which I was entitled to. So I said, "Larry, the year you don't turn in at least 100,000 miles in travel in this district, you are fired." He was my eyes and ears; he traveled the district constantly. That's how we took care of district problems. He went to board of supes [county supervisor] meetings, city councils. If there was a brush

fire somewhere out in one of the areas, he would be there, take notes, and find out what was going on.

SENEY: Let me go back to a little more about Lake Tahoe. . . . I want to ask you about another thing and that is the Tahoe Regional Planning Commission which later becomes the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. You carried some of the legislation on that too, didn't you?<sup>1</sup>

CHAPPIE: Ay, ay ay. I'm a little saddened to see what's happened to that. Well, the path to hell was strewn with good intentions, I guess. When I first got in the assembly, there was the beginnings of the turmoil up there and I did my level best to try and . . .

SENEY: . . . let me stop you to say that that was when the water quality began to obviously decline in the lake and some kind of building restriction was going to be necessary. You're dealing with three counties [Nevada and El Dorado counties in California and Douglas County in Nevada] and two states . . .

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<sup>1</sup>A.B. 390, 1967-1968, Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 731 (1970).

A.B. 67, 1967-1968, Reg. Sess. (1968).

A.B. 493, 1977-1978, Reg. Sess. (1978).

CHAPPIE: . . . Yes, three counties and two states and a city. Well, no, no, now it's a city [city of South Lake Tahoe]. The battle lines were beginning to be drawn. I tried to bring people together and, boy, I'll tell you it was tough because there weren't too many people up there at the time, and we had this real growth starting. It was just incredible. And the need for sewage export--I helped form the first sewer district up there which was just controversial as hell.<sup>1</sup> I proposed a modest zoning plan up there,<sup>2</sup> and they came over the hill after me and tried to defeat me in Georgetown and Cool. [Senator John C.] Begovich was at that time the senator, an unguided missile. I love John, but geez, what he knew about local government, you could stick in a thimble. He didn't help a great deal. So in all that melee, I finally went when Reagan became governor and I said, "Goddamn, Ron, you know, maybe it's time you and [Governor] Paul Laxalt sit down . . . "

SENEY: . . . Governor of Nevada . . .

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<sup>1</sup>A.B. 836, A.B. 1279, 1969-1970 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 1159 (1970).

<sup>2</sup>A.B. 1941, 1969-1970 Reg. Sess. (1969).

CHAPPIE: . . . Yes, "and talk about this thing because we are going to have egg on our face. The forces are at work. We're being branded as environmental killers, as being irresponsible. And I got these Mickey Mouse bills around here to start things in motion."

Well, I knew Paul, and I knew his brother [Robert Laxalt] Bob much better. He's done a lot of writing for National Geographic [Society], as you probably know, in terms of the ethnicity of the Basque heritage. I used to sell them grapes, and so I got pretty well acquainted with Bob. Finally, I got Reagan and convinced him that they ought to get together.

Pat Brown had tried it prior to that. The last time Pat was up there, his daughter ran off with some guy and got married, and he went into a snit, and, Christ, got drunk. Any rate that's another story.

So through Bob, I got Paul and Reagan together. That's what generated that great friendship they developed. While I didn't feel they devoted enough time and effort to that problem, at least they got great press and finally got things going. The people in the basin were really angry because of the imposition

and callousness of a lot of those appointed people up there, that just rolled them over. When Jerry [Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr.] got to be governor, one of his appointees--they had a prohibition on paving and cutting trees--to the regional agency up there cut down a hundred trees and paved a huge parking area right looking into the lake, you know. It was bad. I wish we could have done better. We still haven't solved the problem as you know. But that is history. You take your best shot.

SENEY: Those things I've asked you about stood out to me. There are many, many other pieces of legislation having to do with commemorating the Donner Party trail,<sup>1</sup> selling the state's interest in Squaw Valley,<sup>2</sup> creating the Placer County Water Agency,<sup>3</sup> and there were a number of things. Most of the things that you devoted your time to during this first period really had to do with the district itself.

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<sup>1</sup>A.B. 266, 1967-1968 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 304 (1967).

<sup>2</sup>A.B. 557, 1967-1968 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 1251 (1967).

<sup>3</sup>A.B. 566, 1967-1968 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 117 (1967).



CHAPPIE: There were a lot of unattended problems, and people found that we could help them solve those problems.

SENEY: Was this because the seat had been vacant for a year and a half?

CHAPPIE: . . . Yeah . . .

SENEY: . . . When Lunardi went to the senate . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . A lot of that. And look, Paul and I are like brothers, but Paul had some real family problems. His first wife died an alcoholic, and Paul kind of neglected the district for a period of time. I think that is why he opted to go to the senate so he didn't have to run every two years. I have great regard for Paul; I love the guy. That was what created that initial surge of legislation, but I always carried around a hundred bills. People used to get on my case, and I would say, "What the hell, I've got eleven counties." That's less than ten bills per county.

SENEY: Which of these local district bills stood out in your mind as important or difficult to pass during this first period up to 1970?

CHAPPIE: None of them were easy because you had people like Alan Sieroty that had no--and he was a

potent force down there--conception of local government. That was anathema to him.

SENEY: He was from Los Angeles?

CHAPPIE: That was an anathema to him. And goes without saying the minute one of these little bills would surface, he would be out there with his cannon trying to shoot it out of the sky, you know. I had occasion to introduce a bill to form an irrigation district provided for non-resident voters.<sup>1</sup> There were only fifteen voters in the whole damn district, but they needed the water project. That's the only way they could get it. There was no one living in the district. The hired hands lived there, but they weren't land owners. I mean that was like cutting my leg off to get that bill passed. You just had to work your butt off and go in and beg or end-run the cats, you know, like Knox with the Tahoe-Truckee Sanitation Agency. Knox understood local government better than any of us, you know. So there were different forces at work, but they were all important because of my feeling about local government. God, give them the tools to do the job. But then some of the big city

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<sup>1</sup>A.B. 518, 1967-1968 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 589 (1968).

legislators felt there was a subversive plot, you know. [Laughter]

SENEY: One of the things you carried was architectural barriers legislation for the handicapped.<sup>1</sup> Why did you carry that?

CHAPPIE: Aaah, you let your heart get away with your head sometimes. I had a guy up in Newcastle and one day, he called and said, "Gino, you ain't doing nothing for Easter Seals." He was another wop. And I said, "Richard [Saladana], you know, don't bother me." Well, it was Easter Seal time, and he brought this little gal down in a wheelchair and braces. I had five kids of mine, and they were all healthy. And here was this little kid sitting in my lap--you did the picture thing--and he related the problem he had getting that youngster in the capitol. I said, "The hell you say." And he said, "Come on, I'll show you, Gino." We had one entrance in that capitol where you could, with effort, get a wheelchair in. And I said, "Well, what do we do?" He said, "Well,

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<sup>1</sup>A.B. 1419, 1967-1968 Reg. Sess. (1967).

A.B. 7, 1967-1968 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 261 (1968).

A.B. 764, 1969-1970 Reg. Sess. (1969).

A.B. 2763, 1971-1972 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 1301 (1971).

A.B. 2764, 1971-1972 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 1458 (1971).

CHAPPIE: these are called architectural barriers."

Learning process. So I carried the first bill in my view, as far as I can determine, that had to deal with architectural barriers in the legislature. I caught hell. I mean the building community come out, guns ablazing. You know, all you're doing is lowering the phone, lowering the drinking fountain, widening the crappers stall a little bit, building ramps. I gave a lot of blood, and I figured, well, OK, this is the way it's going to be. So then I started my campaign.

[Assemblyman] John [P.] Quimby was paraplegic, very brilliant young man. Damn near drank himself to death, but he's now AA [Alcoholics Anonymous], and I feel good for him. And he was in the legislature, thirty years old. The only guy I ever knew who'd get drunk, fall out of his chair, and break his ankle. It was that bad. And when he saw--I think it was the second bill--he came by one day and said, "Gino, I want to help." I said, "OK, John, what do we do?" "Well," he said, "when you get your bill before Ways and Means, I'll round up a hundred people in wheelchairs." They reserved, and still do, the front row of those hearing rooms for legislators waiting to have their bills heard.

So you are right there and available. So came the day, and he got a hundred people in wheelchairs and instructed them to come in the door in Room 4202, and, see, they rode over the feet, the toes of every legislator sitting there waiting to hear his bills. That son of a bitch-- I mean he did a job you couldn't believe--these people would just whip through and say, "Oh, pardon me." And just crunch, crunch, crunch. Well, just by sheer weight of numbers, they made a point. I got my bill. Shortly after that, I arranged to have a Handicap Day and offered to put legislators in wheelchairs for half a day. They'd get in the elevators and the wheels would drop through . . .

[End of Tape 3, Side B]

[Begin Tape 4, Side A]

CHAPPIE: From then on we got on a roll. We had raised the issue and created some awareness. Then I got into the logo, the little guy in the wheelchair, that was part of ours. We got into the state parks system.<sup>1</sup> I got the U.S. Forest Service at Mammoth to create the first architectural barrier free forest service park for the handicapped.

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<sup>1</sup>A.B. 366, 1977-1978 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 946 (1977).

Initially, it was all public buildings and then new public buildings, then retrofitted, then we got into the private sector. And then . . .

SENEY: . . . These were all legislation<sup>1</sup> . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Yes, yes. Well, then it became popular, and a lot of guys got into [it]. Because of that I now serve on the Architectural Transportation Barriers Control Board. It's a presidential-appointed group. I led that outfit into the environmentally-sensitive handicapped people. We had a hearing in Frisco [San Francisco] recently in the Holiday Inn. In order for the handicapped to get in, they had to go through the kitchen, and it is supposedly barrier free. We had people call in. We have public forums; we meet all over the nation. We had six people call in and say, "Sorry, we can't attend your meeting because we are sensitive to the toxins in the carpeting, the formaldehyde in the walls and all of the outgassing." So I kind of drug that outfit into this arena now. It's been a fun experience.

SENEY: Would you regard this as one of the more important things you've done during your time in the legislature?

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<sup>1</sup>See legislation cited above.

CHAPPIE: I feel pretty warm about it. You do the best you can. And now you look around, people are cognizant of the problem. They're, I think, kind of sensitive to it. There is still a lot to be done. Some of the worst facilities are the post offices, particularly in the metropolitan areas, like New York City where you've got these old "historic" buildings. You can't get to them and that's been one of our major problems, getting the post office to retrofit or to vacate if need be, and its expensive, you know. But by the same token, we built a new home, and I don't have a round doorknob in the house. They are all levers; you learn, if you get arthritic, you can't grab a round doorknob, but if you've got a lever, you can use your elbow. I have no stairs in the house; these things are so simple, they're so simple.

SENEY: You mean you built a new home . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Yes, just finished it . . .

SENEY: . . . And even though this is not an immediate need of yours . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . It's a long range . . .

SENEY: . . . What you've done here, you think you may need it at some point or it just ought to be built this way . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . That's right. I think they should be built that way. They're all common sense, you know. It's been a hell of an experience. Thanks to the Easter Seal girl.

SENEY: Are there any other areas that you think in this early period of having to do with bills that were in the district that are important, that you would like to say anything about? I've got some others here. You've got irrigation district improvements<sup>1</sup> and school bus financing,<sup>2</sup> having to do with county bonds to make sure they mature and become payable in equal total amounts.<sup>3</sup> That was surely important to someone.

CHAPPIE: Yes, whoever. Did a lot of work for the Nevada Irrigation District and the Yuba County Water Agency, and we helped them get their project under way. Did some work for Placer County Water Agency, helped form a couple of other water agencies down the road.<sup>4</sup> I can't remember if it was Calaveras, Tuolumne and or both. It made me

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<sup>1</sup>A.B. 75, 1967-1968 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 35 (1967).

<sup>2</sup>A.B. 90, 1967-1968 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 299 (1967).

<sup>3</sup>A.B. 161, 1967-1968 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 37 (1967).

<sup>4</sup>A.B. 566, 1967-1968 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 117 (1967).



feel good in that I kind of got to be, if you can call it that, the champion of the little counties. I have represented, let's see, Alpine and Sierra, the two smallest counties in the state. Thanks to reapportionment I've represented twenty-nine of the fifty-eight counties. I learned a little bit about their problems.

SENEY: You also sponsored legislation which was statewide in impact, and we certainly talked about that. The handicapped legislation is certainly part of it. Others had to do with placing welfare recipients into jobs<sup>1</sup> and in developing uniform procedures in computing welfare grants,<sup>2</sup> day care for welfare recipients who were in job training<sup>3</sup> and so forth . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Didn't get to the doggie bonbons yet, did you?

SENEY: I think you mentioned that to me last time we talked . . .

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<sup>1</sup>A.B. 210, 1967-1968 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 1369 (1968).

<sup>2</sup>A.B. 361, 1967-1968 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 1396 (1968).

<sup>3</sup>A.B. 1595, 1967-1968 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 1313 (1968).

CHAPPIE: . . . The reason that. . . . Some of this stuff is pretty heavy, and I never did understand it, I think I commented about my blind Korean consultant . . .

SENEY: . . . Yes, you did . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . This kid ultimately went on with Veneman when he went to HHS [Department of Health and Human Services] in [Washington,] D. C. Brilliant, he is still back there as a private consultant. Just two years ago, three years ago, he received a MacArthur grant, where you get a quarter of a mil[lion] a year for five years, Tom Joe. I bought him a necktie. He's an incredible person. So a lot of that was pretty heavy. Hell, I never understood half of it. We were just trying to make the system work, and we finally got Moretti and Reagan together; that's why I think we did some good things.

SENEY: Let me ask you about Governor Brown because you were in office for the last two years of his term. Now you mentioned the last time we talked about meeting him in his . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Yes, hard knocks . . .

SENEY: . . . And his mistake about hard knocks. What other kind of a relationship did you have with him? How would you evaluate him as a governor,

both what you thought of him then and perhaps if your opinions changed, what you might think of him today?

CHAPPIE: I always got along with Pat. You know, you can talk to the guy and disagree in a friendly fashion. Not so with the moonbeam.

SENEY: Jerry Brown.

CHAPPIE: The space cadet. I think history will treat Pat very gently. He was kind of a visionary. He stuck to his guns and wasn't a flaming lib [liberal]. He was a very practical politician. I think if you can point to anything as a hallmark, it was that statewide water development. He did a hell of a job. In his last couple of years, some of his appointees were a little bit strange, Hugo Fisher<sup>1</sup> and some of those cats, [William E.] Bill Warren<sup>2</sup>. I guess they were looking for work, and Pat was on his way out. But that's part of the syndrome. I imagine "Duke" [Governor George Deukmejian] is maybe having some of those problems himself. All governors do. I don't think you can downgrade him for that. I always felt that over the years, you mellow a little bit, and I've gotten to know

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<sup>1</sup>Director of Health and Welfare, 1962-1966.

<sup>2</sup>Director of Water Resources, 1959-1967.

him. I've been to Saints and Sinners with him, flew to Alaska with him for a week, and he still remembers me. [Laughter] No, I have good feelings about Pat. Had his son done half the job that the old man did, we would be in a lot better shape, I feel.

SENEY: One of the things that was said about Pat Brown by both his enemies and his friends was that if you were the last guy to talk to him, you probably got the decision out of him you wanted; did you find that was true?

CHAPPIE: Generally, yes, generally. I think like a lot of us, he had a hard time saying "No." Yeah, what the hell is wrong with being human? Sometimes it shakes people because, you know, I got his word, and I can go to the bank with it. [Laughter] Then you haven't got it.

SENEY: How would you describe Ronald Reagan? As I look around your office, I see many pictures of both Governor Reagan and President Reagan, and I know you had a close working relationship with him. Were you surprised by his 1966 victory?

CHAPPIE: No, no, no. I'm no political pundit but, geez, just tracking around the district and listening, going to a few things, it was there. It was there. People were ready, and the movement had

been in place for a number of years as you well know. You know, the visits Sunday afternoon with the guy with the tapes and the little "show and tell" cards, it worked. It worked hard and put the bricks in place.

SENEY: I'm not sure I understand what you mean when you say the Sunday afternoon visit . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . They had a brigade of people throughout the state that would call and say, "Hey, I've got a little message here from Ronald Reagan. Got a few minutes, I'd like to have you listen to it."

Well, twenty-mule team, what the hell. G-E [General Electric]. Progress is Our Most Important Product. . . . They would come to your front room. They came to my front room. I mean, geez, all at once, God, the flags are flying and you can hear John Phillip Sousa coming down the road. It was effective as hell, at least with me, and it had to be with some other people too.

SENEY: Did they aim this at Republican officeholders like yourself or would you say more generally.

CHAPPIE: More generally, yes. Obviously, there were more Democrats than officeholders.

SENEY: Now when Governor Reagan came to Sacramento, he did not have a good relationship with the

legislature to begin with, even people like  
Speaker Monagan<sup>1</sup> . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Oh, yeah . . .

SENEY: . . . said that he distrusted him, disliked the  
legislature . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Oh, yeah . . .

SENEY: . . . The people he brought with him felt the  
very same way. What was it like during those  
first two years?

CHAPPIE: . . . Yes, I think the first two years were more  
crucial. I was a crazy bastard in those days.  
I'd gotten acquainted with some of the campaign  
guys so I had a little better entree than  
[Assemblyman] Don [R.] Mulford, for example. Old  
Mulf, he'd stumbled in the caucus for years and  
years . . .

SENEY: . . . The minority leader . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . The minority leader, yes. "The Mulf," as  
we affectionately called him. He's still around  
somewhere. And he'd just get all flabbergasted  
and sputter and wave his arms, and once in a  
while I'd say, "Well, by God, Mulf, let's go down

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<sup>1</sup>Robert T. Monagan, "Increasing Republican Influence in  
the State Assembly," an oral history conducted 1981 by  
Gabrielle Morris, in The Assembly, The State Senate, and The  
Governor's Office, 1958-1974 (Regional Oral History Office,  
Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1982)  
33.

and raise hell with [Phillip] Battaglia."<sup>1</sup>

Well, we got rid of Battaglia and then . . .

SENEY: . . . There was some scandal about Phil Battaglia wasn't there?

CHAPPIE: Yes, we went down and talked to the governor about him. We averted the scandal.

SENEY: There were allegations that he was homosexual.

CHAPPIE: Yes, yes. And, you know, that's a hard thing to do. But, boy, in those days, they were still in the closet. I found it was quite easy to deal with [William P.] Bill Clark, [Edwin] Ed Meese [III], and Mike Deavor<sup>2</sup> and some of the minions had been staffers. I used to chum Jackie [Habecker], the redheaded gal that survived about five governors out there in reception. I used to comp her into Harrah's on the weekend. You know, so we had a good working relationship, and if I wanted to get in the electric door, why I had it.

SENEY: The people you mentioned were the top level people . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Yes . . .

SENEY: . . . Mr. Clark and Mr. Meese and so forth. But there were several liaison people with the

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<sup>1</sup>Aide to Governor Reagan.

<sup>2</sup>Aides to Governor Ronald Reagan.

legislature, Jack Lindsay, [Senator Vernon L.]  
Vern Sturgeon . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . old Virgin Sturgeon, former state senator.  
He helped Reagan a lot. Vern was quite  
instrumental in bringing the political realities  
to Reagan. He used to hammer on him. I heard  
him swear at him.

SENEY: Swear at Reagan?

CHAPPIE: Yes, yes. George [R.] Steffes was one of the  
better ones. He's a prominent lobbyist now.  
George and I worked very closely together. He  
was liaison to the assembly and Sturgeon to the  
senate. And then ultimately, Sturgeon went off  
Reagan's staff. They did more, I think, to  
impress on Reagan what his responsibilities were  
to the legislature. Reagan never did understand  
reapportionment. He's the one who put us back to  
twenty-three members. That was sad.

SENEY: You are alluding here to his veto of the 1971  
legislation. Even the Democrats say if he had  
let that go through, the best the Democrats could  
have hoped for was forty-four seats. And . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . It was forty-one, thirty-eight the way we  
cut the deal.

SENEY: Let me ask you about that because it is very  
interesting. The Democrats say the key here was



when [Assemblyman] Bill Brophy beat [Assemblyman Richard J.] Alatorre in a special election<sup>1</sup>. On a Sunday night you had a deal, and Tuesday Brophy beats Alatorre. Your friend Assemblyman Jerry Lewis who was one of the key players then said, "By God, we can take these guys. Let's not agree to anything."<sup>2</sup> The deal falls through; it goes to court, the Chief Justice [Donald R.] Wright appoints a special master; they draw up a plan and the Democrats made out much better than they would . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Yes . . .

SENEY: . . . have if Reagan had signed it.

CHAPPIE: . . . And then [Assemblyman Kenneth] Cory steals the tapes from the Rules Committee. He's got five million dollars worth of research, the demographics, the whole nine yards. They creamed us. Heaven help me, but I can recall Reagan coming down to the caucus and lounge at two in the morning in his bedroom slippers and saying, "Well, I'd trust the courts sooner than you sons of bitches." [Laughter] I still love the guy.

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<sup>1</sup>November 16, 1971.

<sup>2</sup>Robert Moretti, "Recollections of an Assembly Speaker," an oral history conducted 1982 by Steven D. Edgington, in Legislative-Governor Relations in the Reagan Years: Five Views. (Oral History Program, California State University, Fullerton, 1983), 182.

He was totally insensitive to what the hell it was all about in terms of the long haul, the future of the party and the system. Hell with the party, the system. Christ, we went to twenty-three members and who the hell then wanted to be minority leadership, the two wops. But we got them back.

SENEY: Who do you mean when you say "the two wops?"

CHAPPIE: [Assemblyman Paul] Priolo and I. Yes, we brought them back from twenty-three to thirty-one when I left. So at least we could kill the two-thirds<sup>1</sup> thing. Once we got past twenty-five, we were cool. Then it got to be fun again. Even the Democrats would come around and say, "When are you guys going to get twenty-five votes?" Because that's a pretty heavy load to put on a party that can just roll you whenever they want to in terms of budget, spending bills and all that.

SENEY: And when you are that low, you have trouble recruiting good candidates.

CHAPPIE: Oh, yeah, I mean . . .

SENEY: . . . And money . . .

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<sup>1</sup>During this period a two-thirds majority of both houses was required to pass the budget. After the passage of Proposition 13 in June, 1978, a two-thirds majority was also required to pass all tax increases.

CHAPPIE: . . . You got to believe it, money. Ho, ho.

SENEY: Let's talk about that the next time cause I want to move into the seventies the next time we talk. I want to get back to Mr. Reagan again and his relationship with the legislature. Because most people make a line, draw a line between 1966 and 1970, and then 1970 to 1974. And Mr. Reagan apparently comes to terms with the legislature after his second election. He realizes that he has to do that.

CHAPPIE: That's right.

SENEY: One of the people who was one of Mr. Reagan's key players, I'm talking about staff people, was Casper [W.] Weinberger . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . The Cap . . .

SENEY: . . . who had been an assembly member. . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Yep . . .

SENEY: . . . and a highly-regarded assembly member.

CHAPPIE: Very well-respected.

SENEY: How did you react to him as finance director and as a key player in the Reagan administration?

CHAPPIE: Good move. Jesus, we had "Cash-Liquidity." What the hell was that finance director's name. He was an absolute idiot. Absolute idiot. [Gordon P.] Smith, I think was his name. And then we had [Earl] Brian who headed the Health and Welfare

Department. He was a real dummy. We finally got rid of Gordon Smith.

SENEY: That was it.

CHAPPIE: What a dummy. We got rid of him, and Cap came on board. He had good rapport with the legislature. He was a good finance director, did his homework, knew his way around. I think he really started Reagan on the right track. I don't know who else to attribute it to, really.

SENEY: You know there is a difference of opinion among the Democrats about Cap Weinberger and his reputation for truthfulness. Speaker Moretti has said that he felt Weinberger had even lost some credibility with the Republicans, that his figures could not be trusted and he, Moretti, thought Vern Orr was the best of Reagan's finance directors.<sup>1</sup> Is he expressing a partisan view there, do you think?

CHAPPIE: I haven't really thought of Vern, God love him. Yes. Good point, good point.

SENEY: That Mr. Orr was really more adept at managing relations with the legislature and Mr. Weinberger wasn't particularly adept.

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Moretti, Legislative-Governor Relations in the Reagan Years: Five Views, 155.

CHAPPIE: Yes, he was prone to be brusque. Geez, I'd forgotten all about Vern Orr, and I went to his retirement when he left as Secretary of the Air Force. You're right; you're correct. I stand corrected. Yes, Vern moved.

SENEY: Did you have much contact with Mr. Reagan outside of the welfare business during the first four years? Did he come around much? Did he invite the legislators to any kind of a . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Oh, yes. Oh, yes, particularly during the period when we had control [1968-1970]. Every Thursday we used to go out to 45th Street, and downstairs in the basement, we would have beer and popcorn. We'd shoot the bull and strategize. Nancy [Reagan] would be puttering around. It was interesting; we had some great exchanges. I'll never forget [Senator] Milton Marks, Uncle Milty, nervous nellie. You never knew where the hell he was. Now he's a Democrat where he always belonged. Like a pregnant fox in a forest fire, on any issue you never knew where the hell he was. You never knew if you could count on him. We were in the mid of some great big war with the Democrats, and we're trying to pin Uncle Milty down in terms of what he's going to do with the vote and finally Reagan--I never saw him so

violent--we're all sitting there around the table with these big schooners of beer and popcorn, and Reagan says, "Milty, you, son of a bitch,--Bam--you are not a Republican." Beer all over the place, popcorn on the floor, Milty gets up and bolts, bolts up the steps [Laughter] and left.

Frequently, he [Reagan] would have big parties out at his home, bi-partisan. He did finally begin to generate a rapport with the legislature. It was kind of a command performance; boy, when Ron and Nancy invited you to a social function that was the place to be. It wasn't a command performance that you had to be there, but you wanted to be. It was uptown; and a lot of us country bumpkins had never seen anything like that. He had class.

SENEY: A very affable fellow.

CHAPPIE: Oh, God love him. And he was accessible even in the first term. You could go down and talk to him. Granted he didn't know a hell of a lot about what was going on. But I always got results. He'd turn to somebody and say, "Do what you can to help the paesan."

SENEY: Did you feel as though he had a good sense of what was going on?

CHAPPIE: Well, he was misinformed, too.

SENEY: You did mention that as well. That he thought there were too many welfare cheats. You did a study that indicated differently. He was willing to listen to you and take a look at your evidence. Do you have a sense that he had a grasp of what was going on and that he was in charge of things?

CHAPPIE: Yes, sir. He had an innate ability to negotiate. Now whether he learned that during the strife in the motion picture industry on that panel or whatever he was on . . .

SENEY: . . . Could you give me an illustration of a session in which he would help carry on negotiations?

CHAPPIE: He did it very cleverly; it's hard to put your finger on it. Oft times you'd go down there, and he'd let us sit in on his cabinet meetings, for example. The quote, unquote leadership. He'd give an opportunity to make a pitch. On very controversial issues, he would turn to both sides and say, "OK, tell me," and he would hear you out. Then he would turn to someone and say, "OK, I think you're right. This is the way we go." Seemed to have a gut feeling. I watched him in [Washington] D.C. He made some bad decisions, too, but I mean, generally speaking the guy had

played his hunches or his gut or whatever. He seemed to have a gift for that.

SENEY: That would merge with a pretty good political instinct.

CHAPPIE: Oh, hey. A great orator. He knew how to sell a package. He knew how to get on the phone. You didn't necessarily hear the arms breaking either. But someone would brief him and, "Hey, remember when we did so and so?" He would kind of lock you in. Not saying, "Goddammit, you owe me one." But, "You remember we did so and so." "Oh, yeah." Then the guilt thing would start. "Goddamn, I can't turn on him now." Clever, clever, clever. Yes, love the guy.

SENEY: Let me ask you about another point that kind of takes us back to something that we alluded to last time and that is, that Republicans peaked too early. You got a majority in the assembly in '68 and then lost it in '70. I want to again go back to something the late Speaker Moretti said. Mr. Monagan made him chairman of the Government Organization Committee.<sup>1</sup>

CHAPPIE: . . . Hail, Mary.

SENEY: You are shaking your head and rolling your eyes.

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Moretti, Legislative-Governor Relations in the Reagan Years: Five Views, 159-160.



CHAPPIE: [Laughter] Hail, Mary.

SENEY: Maybe you'll agree with Speaker Moretti's analysis that he said that he thought that was one of Monagan's biggest mistakes . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . It was . . .

SENEY: . . . Because it gave Mr. Moretti an opportunity to raise money . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Gave him the key to the bank . . .

SENEY: . . . that was used in the '70 election. You would agree with that it gave the Democrats a majority again . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . We walked around shaking our heads saying, "Jesus Christ, you got the fox in the hen house." Yeah, Moretti used it. He used it. Why he raised more bread than you could throw a rock at. Hell, that's the way it works, you know.

But that was really the major blunder. One, not cleaning house, but two, then giving them the key to the lobbyists' treasury.

SENEY: Moretti indicates that he was offered the Public Utilities Committee to begin with and refused it. Then Bagley was sent around as the emissary . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . That's right . . .

SENEY: . . . to say . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . "How 'bout it?" . . .

SENEY: . . . Yes. And he said to Bagley, "I don't want it. If I could make you Public Utilities chairman, would you want it?"

CHAPPIE: . . . Yes . . .

SENEY: . . . "I'll take Government Organization. I know something about that."<sup>1</sup> Monagan went along with it. Moretti comes across as a very adroit fellow. What would you say about him? How would you evaluate Speaker Moretti?

CHAPPIE: Hey, when you cross a "wop" and an Armenian, look out. He was very clever. He could be ruthless. I think more so than Jesse Unruh. I never had that occasion to suffer his wrath, but I saw what he could do to people.

I have a hard time with that scene. It's fine; power is great and all that stuff, but, Jesus, you've got to live with yourself. I respected Moretti. He treated me very well. We got along quite well. I knew what the point of demarcation was nonetheless.

SENEY: He says almost from the time he came into the legislature which was in '62, just before you, that he was running for speaker . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Oh, sure . . .

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Moretti, Legislative-Governor Relations in the Reagan Years: Five Views, 155.

SENEY: . . . Did you get that sense?

CHAPPIE: Absolutely, absolutely. Bobby was always maneuvering, manipulating, making deals. You could liken him to Willie [L. Brown] or vice versa. Same, that hungry approach. I never really had any aspirations for that kind of leadership. It's a pain in the ass. I was there to have fun and deal with people. Some of the crap that went on. You know it's too bad because . . .

SENEY: How do you mean? What do you mean when you say that?

CHAPPIE: Well, the conniving that goes on that's wasteful, the bleeding people for money, that stuff. It really--I'm not a purie, don't misunderstand me--but, hell, with Jesse, you had [Larry] Margolis and Philip Schott. One guy would have the bag, and the other guy would tell you how much. Hell, it was common knowledge. I don't want any part of that crap. It tarnishes the system, and yet I guess the point there is that good guys seldom win. Look at Monagan; he was as clean as a hound's tooth. [Laughter] Got it right in the ear. But by the same token you have to live with yourself. It's a great life.

[End Tape 4, Side A]

[Session 3, April 5, 1990]

[Tape 5, Side A]

SENEY: I want to ask you about several people on Mr. Reagan's staff, one of whom did not, I think, go with him to Washington. The one I want to ask you about is Bob Carleson who was the Director of the Social Welfare Department.

CHAPPIE: He was not of the typical Reagan breed, I guess is the only way I can describe him. He comported himself totally differently. To my recollection he never mingled a great deal with the other people on the gubernatorial staff. And after his tenure--and I can't even remember how long he even stuck around--he just kind of disappeared into the sunset. I don't know what ever happened to him.

SENEY: Did you have much to do with him given your interest in welfare legislation? I think he was after the period you were chairman . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Right . . .

SENEY: . . . of the Social Welfare Committee. He came after that.

CHAPPIE: Most of the controversy had been put to bed by that time. Legislation had been passed. Ultimately, the courts struck down a good portion of it based on welfare recipient's rights. So Carleson was kind of in the waning years as I recall. Most of the gunfire had died away, and I honestly don't know what ever happened to him.

SENEY: What about Ed Meese who became a fairly controversial individual in the Reagan Presidency, did you have much contact with him when he was on the governor's, Governor Reagan's staff?

CHAPPIE: Quite a bit. Not that I carried that much legislation to the governor, but because of the quote, unquote leadership role in the caucus, I had occasion to go in quite often to speak to him. On other occasions, I would go in and talk about constituent problems or particular issues. There was a lot of dialogue between us on the Tahoe thing, the formation of the bi-state agency and things of that nature. So I did have a lot of contact with him.

SENEY: I've heard it said that apart from whatever his national reputation may have been, while he was on the governor's staff he was quite a reasonable and approachable individual.

CHAPPIE: A real neat guy. Maybe he was a little bit overwhelmed at the presidential level, but in Sacramento he was easy-going; no controversy. He had apparently been delegated the authority to make decisions, and he made a lot of decisions. He never jerked me around; he got along well with the caucus, and he was well-respected by the Democrats too. Just really a regular guy. I don't know how else to describe him.

SENEY: What about Bill Clark who served Reagan in a variety of posts?

CHAPPIE: There was a guy who was a real sweetheart. We still see each other occasionally. At heart, he's just a cowpuncher, soft spoken, very firm. As memory serves, he never did go to law school but challenged the bar.

SENEY: . . . That's right. Yes.

CHAPPIE: But there of all the people Reagan surrounded himself with he was the guy I really, really respected and admired. There's no nonsense about him. He was soft-spoken but firm. Very, very fair. Can't ever recall an instance where you got a bad shake out of him. Just a real hell of a guy.

SENEY: There was someone else who wasn't really on Reagan's staff but--I'm not certain how close he

was to Reagan--that was Lieutenant Governor  
[Robert H.] Bob Finch.

CHAPPIE: Yes, yes. Saw Bob here in the last two or three months. Well, we also appeared when the hearings were going on for the appointment as state treasurer, when one of my former colleagues made the pitch. He's now running for attorney general. Soon here, long forgotten. What the heck is his name? Oh, [Attorney General] Dan Lundgren. I had occasion to get reacquainted with Bob Finch. He was another one of those easy going people that didn't have too high of visibility but was always in the trenches and a good team player. He was somewhat different from [Lieutenant Governor Ed] Reinecke. Who was the other state senator who was lieutenant governor for a short period of time [John L. Harmer]?<sup>1</sup> Oh, well, that's off the subject. I can't remember him. Reagan had three lieutenant governors: Finch, Reinecke, and the third guy [John L. Harmer] was right on the margin, right on the brink of being involved in some perhaps unethical operations.

SENEY: I can't recall the name either.

CHAPPIE: Ah, well, it will come to me.

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<sup>1</sup>Lt. Governor of California, 1974-1979.

SENEY: You know, there was one other thing I meant to ask you about last time and I didn't. It takes us back a little bit in time and that's the incident in 1965 when Jesse Unruh locked up the assembly over the education bill.

CHAPPIE: [Laughter] Yes, that was interesting. He really pulled the pin. We spent one or two nights sleeping on the floor. Because of my long time acquaintance with Pauline Davis, as I recall, I think Bagley and I had the great opportunity to sack out in her private potty off the [assembly] floor. She was the only woman in the legislature at the time. So she had her own private restroom, and I mean, that thing--talk about cushy appointments. We used to call it "the madam's quarters." Soft carpeting. So we sacked out in the potty.

I think that was one of the things that ultimately lead to that tarnished image he [Unruh] developed. He could get ruthless on occasion. That was one of the more unsavory periods in that process.

SENEY: Were you involved at all in the Republican move in that regard? Mr. Monagan said that they were walking back from lunch, he and several others, and they decided to question the education



budget; the Democrats would not reveal the details to the Republicans.<sup>1</sup> And it was that question about the education bill and the unwillingness of the Republicans to vote for it which caused Unruh to lock the legislature up. Did you have anything to do with those discussions?

CHAPPIE: No, because I was just coming on board and Hugh Flournoy was perhaps the leader in that exercise since he was an educator. He was perhaps the only scholarly guy in the whole caucus, but a fun guy. I think he was the one who planted the seeds, and, ultimately, got Monagan and Bagley and some of those people to lead the charge on this.

SENEY: I want also to ask you about your relationship with the senate during the time you were in the assembly. Did you have much to do with the senate in any way over that period of time?

CHAPPIE: I had a lot to do with the senate in that having eleven counties, I was all over the place, and I had three state senators to work with. I carried a lot of bills so I spent a lot of time working the floor on the other side to make certain we

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<sup>1</sup>Robert T. Monagan, The Assembly, The State Senate, and The Governor's Office, 1958-1974, 26.

had the votes. [Senator] Hugh Burns<sup>1</sup> was there when I first went down. He and [Senator John F.] Jack McCarthy ruled in a rather unique fashion. They would top off a bottle of brandy every morning, and then set the day's schedule. We had some real characters in those days. There were a lot of rural legislators.

Then Jack Sieroty was pro tem<sup>2</sup> for a while. [Senator James R.] Jim Mills<sup>3</sup> had a long tenure [as state senate leader].

SENEY: How would you assess his leadership in the senate compared to Burns?

CHAPPIE: Well, Burns was kind of a wheeling and dealing, out of the vest pocket kind of guy. There was very little partisan politics during his time. He and McCarthy had it kind of wired. He took care of everyone. Mills was more the scholarly type. He was a poet among other things, took a philosopher's approach to things. He was prone to lecture. You would go into his office and, God, you'd get into talking about. . . . Well,

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<sup>1</sup>President pro tem 1957-1969.

<sup>2</sup>President pro tem 1970-1971.

<sup>3</sup>President pro tem 1971-1980.

he's the daddy of the Tiajuana Trolley,<sup>1</sup> you know, and he was off somewhat ahead of his time in the view of many of us. So it was a totally different scene that you never knew where he was coming from. Obviously, he was pretty effective and knew how the system operated because he stayed there a long time. I got along well with him. We used to trade Italian jokes. I see him every once in a while, too. I saw him in [Washington] D. C. recently.

SENEY: How would you compare the assembly and the senate?

CHAPPIE: Well, after one man, one vote, why, then the senate began to take on the three-piece-suit image.<sup>2</sup> Prior to that they were pretty loose but then they began on occasion to call themselves the upper house and all that good stuff, you know.

I had a couple of chances to run for the senate, and I always felt it had gotten to be pretty stodgy. With four year terms you get lazy. Now there's a real cleavage between the two houses. That took a while to develop, and

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<sup>1</sup>Trolley line connecting the city of San Diego with Tiajuana, Mexico.

<sup>2</sup>After the Reynold v. Simms in 1957.

again it's like so many of the incumbent seats now, you get locked into that thing, you've got to do some very, very bad things to get defeated anymore. It's a different world.

SENEY: Are you one of those who holds the opinion that the one man, one vote rule as applied to the senate was not a good idea?

CHAPPIE: Yes, yes, very definitely. I talked to a class of kids yesterday and suggested that if you really believe in the one man, one vote then let's reapportion the U.S. Senate, and give California its just desserts. Obviously, that's not going to happen. [United States Senator Everett] Dirksen tried and failed by one vote, I think. No, I felt badly about that. I guess it's because [of] where I come from. In that we really saw a demise in power, or at least in sharing power, in the senate. It was really devastating to the northern California counties.

SENEY: You also seem to suggest when you mention the three-piece-suit business that the membership, the character of the body changed when more seats were shifted to the south.

CHAPPIE: Very definitely because when I first went there L. A. County had one state senator, old [Senator Thomas M.] Tom Rees, and you could certainly see

the inequity of that, but when the preponderance of the seats went south, it's kind of a different world down there. I guess that's what brought the three-piece syndrome into play.

SENEY: I want to ask you now about the reapportionment of 1970. We talked a bit about it last time in the sense that Governor Reagan vetoed the bill that you Republicans initially agreed to. The supreme court then appoints a master and reapportions the state. If I am not mistaken, those districts took effect for the 1972 election, am I right on that fact?

CHAPPIE: Right.

SENEY: First of all let me ask you, did you play any role in helping draw up that plan which Reagan vetoed?

CHAPPIE: Jerry Lewis led the charge. The moment the master was appointed, if memory serves, why obviously the Democrats had Michael Berman and Ken Cory in their store. They split the pot in terms of the taxpayer's money that went to each caucus to generate their own program in terms of reapportionment. So Jerry Lewis, he hired some people out of Claremont College. They rented some space out 21st Street somewhere. And geez, you had to have the key to Fort Knox to get into

that place; they did all their gyrations behind closed doors.

[Assemblyman Ernest M.] Mobely and [Assemblyman Kenneth L.] Maddy and I and [Assemblyman Gordon W.] Duffy pretty much helped draw the lines this side of the Tehachipis. We were about the only Republicans at that time in the assembly. That was interesting. We devoted a lot of time to that but in terms of what happened south of the Tehachipis . . .

SENEY: . . . You were about the only Republicans north of the Tehachipis?

CHAPPIE: That's right, at the time. Then later on we picked up a number of other seats. But at that time we were the key players.

SENEY: When the master's plan came out, you no longer had the Sixth District. You now had the Third.

CHAPPIE: . . . Third, right . . .

SENEY: . . . And as I looked at the maps of that, your residency was actually in El Dorado County, wasn't it? Representing the Sixth District?

CHAPPIE: That's right.

SENEY: So you moved . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . I had to. They drew the line a mile from the ranch. So I moved to Roseville. And that's where they almost got me because then I became a

carpetbagger. It was '74 that Barron Reed ran against me.

SENEY: If we could get to that in just a minute because I want to ask you about your campaigns. The Third District is now, as I'm sure you remember, Placer County, Nevada County, Yuba County. Those were three counties who had been in the Sixth District; now they add Sutter, Colusa, Sierra and a part of Butte County. Why did you choose to run in that district rather than staying in the remnants of the Sixth District which now became the Seventh District?

CHAPPIE: [Senator John] Garamendi appeared on the scene. Part of that was the pressures of trying to represent those three counties on the east side of the Sierras. You know, I totaled three cars and one airplane trying to cover that beast. Maybe I figured I better quit while I'm ahead. The new Third looked attainable, and still with the view to running for the congress that was the way to move.

SENEY: So you had the Congress in mind at that time?

CHAPPIE: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

SENEY: And Garamendi looked to you to be a fairly tough opponent?

CHAPPIE: He was tough. Right, because he was from Mokelumne Hill, Calaveras County. That was kind of the heart of that new district. He had a strong following: young, handsome, articulate, and all that stuff. So I just checked my options and decided to go north. [Laughter]

SENEY: [Laughter] And had to move your residence as a result.

CHAPPIE: Absolutely. That began the multiple moves.

SENEY: Because you moved later when you ran for congress.

CHAPPIE: I moved then to Chico when I got the congressional district because they had reapportioned Placer out of the district. [Congressman] Phil Burton kept after me.

SENEY: [Laughter] We'll talk about that later when we get to your career in congress.

CHAPPIE: [Laughter] OK.

SENEY: When you ran in '64, which we talked about before, you had primary opposition.

CHAPPIE: Yes.

SENEY: You had general election opposition which you said you won handily. What was your 1966 race like?

CHAPPIE: I can't remember. I think in '68, I had primary opposition. I had a tire dealer in Loomis that



ran against me. Geez, isn't that something? Oh, '68 was the educator with the pot belt buckle. What was his name?<sup>1</sup> Yeah, he was a high school teacher up in Yuba City, later went as a lobbyist for the [California] Teacher's Association. Can't remember his name to save my life right now. But he was into this liberal movement and had a great big bronze belt buckle with the impression of a marijuana leaf on it. We put a hit piece out on him finally and that caused some concern. But, geez, I can't remember his name. I remember the '68 campaign, but '66, good grief.

SENEY: How about 1970?

CHAPPIE: 1970. I think I had a supervisor from Yuba County that ran against me.<sup>2</sup> I can't recall his name. Isn't that terrible?

SENEY: I'm not sure it is. Because what it suggests to me is that these must not have been very tough races. Had they been, you probably would have had a clearer recollection of them.

CHAPPIE: Barron Reed<sup>3</sup> certainly rings a bell to this day, because he came within eight hundred votes.

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<sup>1</sup>George Shaw ran unsuccessfully against Mr. Chappie in the 1976 general election.

<sup>2</sup>Yuba County Supervisor Jim Ferris was defeated by Mr. Chappie in the 1978 general election.

<sup>3</sup>Defeated by Mr. Chappie in the 1974 general election.

SENEY: So we get to '74. You now run in the new Third District, and you say you had something of a carpetbagger reputation at that point. Were you in with another incumbent at that point?

CHAPPIE: No, this was when the Democrats fielded Barron Reed who was a very liberal, young, articulate school teacher from Roseville. CTA [California Teacher's Association] put a lot of money into it. This is during the period of time when the Auburn Dam had been authorized, and he floated the rumor and voiced the accusations that I own all of the property around the proposed reservoir site.

SENEY: Was there any truth to that?

CHAPPIE: None whatsoever. Certainly, I owned the ranch, and I did own property in the Pilot Hill area but nothing in the take. And ultimately, it caught up with him. People got wise to it. He then became the Jerry Brown appointed manager of Cal Expo. Screwed that up as well too. They almost put him in jail, but that's another story.

SENEY: Why don't you tell that story?

CHAPPIE: Well, when I defeated him, obviously he had kind of fallen into disrepute with the teaching community because he did prevaricate a lot. So Jerry Brown appointed the fallen warrior to head

Cal Expo. Ultimately, I served on the subcommittee in Ways and Means that had oversight, and he was milking the concessionaires. They were making change out of cigar boxes. People were dipping in the till. It got so flagrant that I just put the Little Hoover Commission<sup>1</sup> on him. They did everything but indict him. He then kind of went into never, never land and resurfaced a few years later and ran against [Congressman Norman D.] Shumway for the congress. And that's the last I've ever heard of him. He was a sneaky one.

SENEY: What about '76 and '78, the last two times you ran for the assembly? Did you have opposition in those campaigns of any significance?

CHAPPIE: But no significance. No, no. I can't recall those. Gee, that's terrible, isn't it? I remember my first primary opposition, Brooks Fisk. He was a right-wing crazy from out of District Ten over in Yuba County. Geez, you know the John Birch syndrome. It was surprising to learn that even in this chain of mountain counties, there was quite a movement of those people during that period. They were just coming

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<sup>1</sup>Commission on California State Government Organization and Economy.

into their own. They had the little cells in Nevada County. Man, I'll tell you some of them were real crazy.

SENEY: So we're talking about back in the 1960s now?

CHAPPIE: Yes, yes. That's right. Sixties. Boy, loonies! They were hard to deal with. Their little underground network. I only beat him by 2,800 votes.

SENEY: If you can recall, how much did the cost of running escalate? You ran from '64 to '78. So we're talking about seven campaigns, aren't we? Can you recall what happened to the costs during that period?

CHAPPIE: Very vividly. My first campaign was about \$12,000 to \$14,000 bucks. My last--I guess I had a little opposition in '76--that one got into the quarter of a million syndrome. By that time technology was part of that too. You get into direct mail, you have to buy the computer, you have to have someone to feed that sucker, care for it, punch things into it. It gets very expensive the moment you generate that kind of equipment, then you've got to put it to use, so you start spitting out mailers and all that good stuff, and hit pieces, and special mailers, and special groups. It feeds on itself. That in my

judgment was what really accelerated the costs of doing this thing.

SENEY: Did you begin to use campaign consultants as well in your campaigns?

CHAPPIE: No. I kept my initial crew right through the last day. We had our own computer system. He was on full-time. That's costly too when you pay them wages and benefits and all that nonsense. We availed ourselves, obviously, of the resources of the caucus.

SENEY: The Republican caucus in the assembly? How would that work? What could you expect from the Republican caucus?

CHAPPIE: A lot of research. Polls. Assistance at media. Issues. The whole bit.

SENEY: Would they write speeches for you?

CHAPPIE: I didn't have any speech writers. Even to this day, I kind of like to wing it. You go in and sometimes fall on your face, but you go in and after a while you can kind of read the multitude, of the audience. Hopefully, you know what the issue is; [use] basic notes and then take your best shot. Be clear, be brief, be seated.

People don't really like to be read to. When I go to something and somebody gets up there and starts reading to me, it just snaps things

off, and I've never done it. So I never did have any speech writers.

SENEY: As you say, you go from twelve to fourteen thousand dollars to a quarter of a million dollars. That's a twenty times [increase]. I'd like to ask you about the fund raising and how you handled fund raising, who you appealed to and who you could depend upon for funds?

CHAPPIE: In the early days, it was kind of grim. You were stuck with the dead bird and shriveled peas thing. You put on a twenty dollar meal and nineteen went to the overhead factor. Ultimately, when the computer thing appeared, why we just started soliciting by direct mail. We went out and bought lists, stole some, hell, it was part of the process. When I got to congress, we were getting money from all over the nation.

You know, you pick up this group that's oriented to a particular issue and find out who the leaders are, and oft times if they felt you were sympathetic to their cause, not that I ever sold out or committed, but they would give you their lists.

SENEY: Did you raise money outside the district here when you ran for the assembly, too?

CHAPPIE: Not to the degree I did in congress. We weren't really that sophisticated. The last two campaigns, yes. We hit southern Cal. You know, you hit the Republican organization.

SENEY: And that's certainly something you would be doing now if you were running for the assembly.

CHAPPIE: Oh, absolutely.

SENEY: Fund raising outside the district.

CHAPPIE: You have to.

SENEY: What percentage do you suppose toward the end of your funds would have come from direct mail?

CHAPPIE: 90-95 percent.

SENEY: So you had people that you would call up on the phone and say, "Hi, this is Gene. Election time is coming up and I need your help again."

CHAPPIE: That's one of the reasons I quit.

SENEY: Is that right?

CHAPPIE: Yes, very distasteful.

SENEY: Could I get you to pretend that you're putting the arm on me for funds and give me a sense of how you do this?

CHAPPIE: I probably wouldn't do it. The kid that succeeded me, he is just hell on wheels in that respect. He'll call up and say, "Damn it"--why you know he doesn't say damn it, because he is a Mormon--but he'd say . . .

SENEY: . . . This is [Assemblyman] Tim Leslie . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . No, no. [Assemblyman] Wally Herger. He'd say, "Gino, I got to have a thousand bucks. I got a rough campaign. You got to help me." And I'd say, "Wally, friend, I'm broke." He did hit me up, when he was running for congress. Very, very rarely would I call because I guess part of it was the fact that they are damn near all farmers. That was the only industry in the district. And a guy's out here grubbing for his life and during that period they were really on their back with the rice scandal, but most of the furor was over when I went to congress. But that was a terrible jolt to those folks. They had gone from fourteen dollars a sack to six or seven dollars which was what it cost them to produce. I just really had a hard time . . .

SENEY: . . . Now these rice growers were in your Third district, weren't they?

CHAPPIE: Oh, yes. And at that time they were pretty substantial donors. But the way we handled it was, we would get a key guy in the community and say, "Hey, Ben, we need \$5,000 or \$6,000 or \$8,000 or \$10,000. Can you raise it?" He'd go out and get a bunch of checks. We did that with the attorneys.



[End of Tape 5, Side A]

[Begin Tape 5, Side B]

CHAPPIE: I had an attorney in Marysville who was a real activist. He'd work three or four counties. He'd say, "What do you think we need, Gino?" And I'd say, "Well, you know, if you can raise five or ten thou." And he'd just get on the phone. He was really an expert. He'd get on the phone and call his colleagues and say, "OK, I want \$100 bucks. It's for Chappie's campaign. And I want it by the 10th of June, or whenever." So to that degree I did make calls, but as far as getting with a list, I did some of that in [Washington] D.C. with the lobbyists, but seldom, if ever, with individuals.

SENEY: Did you raise much from the lobby groups here in California when you were in the assembly? I ask this because as you are well aware, that's now the routine, to raise the funds through the lobby groups.

CHAPPIE: [From] what I hear now, it's almost outrageous. \$1,000-a-plate dinners and all that good garbage. Never, never in my time. I never did tap lobbyists. I had good rapport with a lot of them, and they just voluntarily hit their association, their organization. But when I got

to congress, it was a little different. You really had to hit them.

SENEY: Let me ask you about the people who gave money. Nothing is free, and while I'm not suggesting that they were buying you, they were clearly interested in what you were interested in, and felt you were going to vote in a way that they would approve of. Let's say I'm one of these people who have written a \$100 check or a \$500 check, are you going to know that in your office? Are you going to have a Roladex in there, that's got my name on it, that's going to indicate how much I've given?

CHAPPIE: No, never, never. I know some guys. Well, maybe Mr. [Senator Joseph B.] Montoya, I shouldn't say that, but hey that's life. The day I signed off on my financial disclosure, in terms of contributions, that went somewhere in the file and I never, never looked at it. And if somebody come in and said to me, "Here's a thousand bucks or a hundred or ten," to this day I'd say, "Hey, I'll take your money, and when you're right, I'm with you, and when you're wrong, you can just bet your butt I'm going to vote against you." That's the only way I operate.

SENEY: Did you ever have a time when someone approached you with an offer of campaign funds that you felt that you had to turn down because it might lead to a situation you would be uncomfortable with?

CHAPPIE: In congress, yes. Grover Connell. I'll name names. It was just like shelling peas. You'd get this constant flow of checks from Grover Connell.

SENEY: Now, we're talking about the rice situation here . . .

CHAPPIE: Yes. I kept returning the flow saying, "We're friends. Don't spoil it. I don't want your damn money." I never took one of his junkets. I see recently in the paper where they disclosed all the legislators that went back to pick up the two thou [thousand] and stay in the Biltmore and all that.

SENEY: This is the Rice Growers Association.

CHAPPIE: No, no. This is Grover Connell. R.G.A. [Rice Growers Associaton] was [a] totally different beast. Connell is perhaps the largest broker in grains in the nation. Out of New Jersey. Multibillion dollar operation. I supported many of his causes. I went to bat for him when I felt he was right, and the press kind of slapped me a few times, but I think I proved myself right. I

never did take his money. Just because of the fear of the taint.

SENEY: But here in California, you never had that problem.

CHAPPIE: No. And most lobbyists--what the hell, we're all human--and if they know they are not going to cut a deal with you, you work at a different level, a different plane.

SENEY: Let's talk about lobbyists. From the period of time that you were in the legislature; their role, individuals who stood out in your mind, individuals that you may have used from time to time. You mentioned the Easter Seal's fellow who got you interested . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . And he was a volunteer . . .

SENEY: . . . Yes. Who else would stand out for whatever reasons?

CHAPPIE: I got the book [lobbyist registration] there. Had a call from old "Zorba the Dumbshit," as I call him, [Assemblyman] Frank Murphy [Jr.]. He was in the caucus with us. So the ties are always there. He called I don't know what he wants.

SENEY: He's a lobbyist now?

CHAPPIE: Yes, a pretty heavy hitter. They were--the way I classified them and use them--a constant source

of instant information. Oft times when I was ready to introduce a piece of legislation, I would call both sides of the issue and say, "All right, how am I going to hurt you guys? Where are you going to oppose me? What don't I know about the issue? What are the chances?" Why waste money and introduce a bill if I knew it was going to get killed or cause me a lot of grief.

SENEY: Let me ask you to be specific about something. This will dovetail into some legislation that I want to ask you about. You sponsored a great deal of legislation. As far as I could determine, you were one of the first to sponsor legislation in the off-road vehicle area. I mean, there were many bills dealing with noise levels and licensing the vehicles and registering the vehicles and training classes and on and on.<sup>1</sup> First, I would like you to discuss that in the context of lobbyist because I assume some would be involved in that. What got you

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<sup>1</sup>A.B. 2342, 1970-1971 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 1816 (1971). "Chappie-Z'berg Off Highway Motor Vehicle Act of 1971."

A.B. 495, 1977-1978 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 681 (1977).

A.B. 655, 1977-78 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 352 (1972).

A.B. 1421, 1972-1973 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 974 (1973).

A.B. 466, 1977-78 Reg. Sess. (1978).

interested in that? What lobbyists were interested with you in that? And so forth.

CHAPPIE: The initial legislation was provoked by a guy by the name of Bud Hooker, an unguided missile to this day. He was one of the early runners--I got a hell of a frog--excuse me.

SENEY: Would you like to get a drink of water?

CHAPPIE: Yes, I'll do that. Excuse me.

SENEY: All right. Sure.

[Interruption]

CHAPPIE: One of the early runners in the snowmobile thing was Bud Hooker. They were just coming into their own. He was an enthusiast and began to run into opposition to their use in various areas. At that time they were noisy, smokey ugly damn things.

And he wandered in the office and said, "Hey, Gino. There is a new sport." And I kind of like the outdoors. So he got me on a machine and we went up to the Donner Pass and fooled around and I kind of fell in love with the thing, and that's what really got me involved in that. The initial stages of the whole OHV [off highway vehicles] program were the enthusiasts that came down and presented their problems, their suggestions. I got involved in the association

and ended up racing and losing all my front teeth and a few other things. And then as the program began to develop, why obviously, the manufacturers got into it because we were starting to hit them in terms of safety, noise levels, air pollution and all that stuff.<sup>1</sup>

SENEY: Did they fight you much on that or did they see you as extending their market?

CHAPPIE: Oh no, they were very, very supportive; one, in expanding the market; two, in making areas available, and three, in supporting the user fee concept. And more importantly to develop areas to concentrate the folks, control their use, get the hell out of people's backyards, off their property, cutting their fences and all that stuff. So in that instance, there was no real organized paid lobbyist. It was a totally new field. Now there's a lobbyist for Honda, all of the OHV industry; they're all over the place. The motorcycle industry, snowmobiles, now we are into mountain bikes; it never quits.

SENEY: The enthusiasts were unorganized to begin with. Did you help to organize them?

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<sup>1</sup>A.B. 519, 1970-1971 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 714 (1971).

CHAPPIE: Oh, absolutely. On the basis that if you don't get your stuff together and quit terrorizing the neighborhoods and destroying the countryside, they are going to bury you sapsuckers. At times I got pretty unpopular with the user group. "By God, I want to go down the Main Street, blat-blat-blat-blat on my motorcycle." And I'd say, "Friends, that day is over." And ultimately, they saw the light. And they had to clean up their act and cover the tatoos and tuck their long hair in their shirt collars when they came to hearings or they were going to get dumped on. So it was kind of an educational process in terms of how government worked. They have been very effective now. They have their own network. They lobby. They have newsletters, periodicals, and they can really drum up support. They are finding they have to put up a little PAC [political action committee] money too. It really has been kind of a fun thing in those terms. Boy, at times it was really hell.

SENEY: Let me suggest to you that normally lobby groups will come to a legislator and want them to do certain things. In this case, I take it, it almost worked the other way around. That is,



your friend comes to you. You then go back to these people and say, "You better begin to lobby." Then I take it you suggest to these people who else they might see in the legislature and how they might behave . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . [That's] how the system works. You don't go in there with leather pants, leather jackets and chains on your hips. But generally speaking, I used the lobbyist as, like I say, a never ending source of information. They have to do their research. People say, "Well, they come in there, and the first thing you know you sold out or they lie to you." My attitude is, the first lobbyist that lies to me never gets back in the door. They know that. Most are a damn sight smarter than I am or they wouldn't be there. So I used them. Oh hell, particularly when that Sun Desert thing was going. My office was right across from the hearing room. I shouldn't say it, but it was like Frank Fats [restaurant] in there in the evenings. Those hearings would go on until early morning, and hell, they would bring their booze in, and I had a wet bar and they'd just sit there and drink and listen to the squawk box. I had great rapport with those guys.

SENEY: Sun Desert was the . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Nuke plant on the California-Arizona border. That went on for weeks and weeks and weeks. Here again I developed some friendships with people to this day. The Derby Club meets every Tuesday at Posey's [bar and restaurant]. The Tuesday before my birthday, the phone rang, and I could hear this uproar in the background and these crazies are singing me "Happy Birthday." After all these years. Aside from the taint of being a lobbyist, there are incredible friendships, like Paul Lunardi. But a lot of the guys are dead, but I can go through that book, and I bet you raise a hundred names that . . .

SENEY: . . . Who stands out in your mind as a really great lobbyist? And why? Let me suggest one name to you. Judge [James D.] Garibaldi is often . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Old Gari . . .

SENEY: . . . mentioned as maybe the most influential and maybe the most capable lobbyist. Would you agree to that?

CHAPPIE: Danny Creighton. Betts Kennedy. Monroe Butler. There was the genesis of lobbying. They were some of the remains of the [Arthur H.] Artie Samish era, but were not the evil type lobbyist.

CHAPPIE: Gari would walk into your office and say, "Hey, paesan, I got a little problem. Here's where my people are." Never, "Don't forget the next campaign." Or "Don't forget I gave you money last time." Never. Very ethical. And, of course, when you get to generate that kind of a reputation, then the media is immediately looking for evil. The conniving backdoor stuff. But those guys were real gentlemen. Paul Lunardi cut himself a record down there. Just very ethical people. They do their homework, and are very helpful. A lot of times they would come in and say, "You're digging yourself a hole. This is the reason why." or "Look out this guy is coming after you. He's going to saw you off at the ankles."

I spend a lot of time talking to school kids about the value of the third house. You are always going to have a bad apple in the barrel, I don't give a damn where you come from. So great friendships and a lot of fun. I use to put on bus tours for lobbyists and legislators up in my district. We used to go to Georgetown, a couple of Greyhound bus loads, just to get away from folks, play a little cards, drink and eat, then

haul them back home at night. Great, great camaraderie.

SENEY: Have you never had any desire to be a lobbyist, yourself? You had wonderful credentials, especially when you came back from the congress.

CHAPPIE: I had a lot of offers.

SENEY: Who from, do you mind saying?

CHAPPIE: A and K [A-K Associates, Inc., Sacramento, California].

SENEY: Which is one of the lobby firms?

CHAPPIE: Yes, one of the bigger ones. What I did for a period of time when I left Washington. . . . I had a kid that worked for me. He was my ag [agricultural] assistant. He used to do all my background work, prepare bills, and all that stuff, analyze bills. Real smart young man. He came from the Marin area. I recruited him off the street back there. [Cough] Excuse me. Over a period of time he developed a reputation in the ag community. One of the lobbying firms back there--one of the heavies, [the] largest privately-owned [lobbying firm] in the nation--come by and offered him a job. He come in, and he said, "Gino, I've got . . ." What the hell, I paid him \$1,500, \$1,600 dollars a month, you

know, peanuts, and they are offering something like forty-five thou [thousand].

And I said, "P. J. [Paul Johnson], get your ass out of here. You've got the ability and, God, you've got a hell of a future. Just keep your nose clean." Well, he set up the lobbying branch with Flashman-Hillard. I don't know if you ever heard of them. They have Spuds McKenzie, all of Anhauser-Busch, [they have] offices around the entire world, and more recently one in Sacramento. Heavy, heavy, heavy; Ralston Purina, Dow Chemical, and all those people.

SENEY: They represent those people before legislatures.

CHAPPIE: They do their P-R, their graphics. This young man opened their lobbying division in D. C. and now it's spread throughout the entire network of Flashman Hillard. I went on board when I retired as their quote-unquote senior political advisor sans salary. My god, I finally garnered my social security, and I couldn't earn more than \$8,600 a year; I said, "God damn it, I'll do it for the fun of it." They flew me around the country, hither and yon. But I really didn't have any desire to because again that's pick and shovel. And you are going to have to set up an

office, you are going to have to be there, you are going to have staff.

SENEY: It's hard work.

CHAPPIE: You bet your sweet patootie it's hard work.

[Laughter] I think it's harder than being a legislator. Because if you represent one organization, let alone--I think Paul [Johnson] was telling me they got in excess of a hundred clients already--so how do you keep a handle on all the bills in the congress, and then if you have an office in Kansas City and St. Louis, L. A., and then Sac[ramento], obviously you have to keep a handle on all the state legislative's bills. It gets to be hard work.

SENEY: This is the trend in lobbying, isn't it? These national firms with branch offices . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Yes, yes . . .

SENEY: . . . I'm sure they recruit local people . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Oh, absolutely . . .

SENEY: . . . to run them but still it has a national flavor to it.

CHAPPIE: But this guy that owns the outfit. . . . A couple of months ago the wife and I went back--I don't have any conflicts--He brings in his entire staff [of] over four hundred people for three days. They go through their workshop routine and

all of that. They have a lot of fun too. They put on skits. But he brings them in from Paris, and Hong Kong, and London. I said, "John, what the hell does this cost you?" And he said, "About a third of a mill[ion] for three days." But the median age of that outfit is thirty-two years. You talk about talent. Jesus, it's frightening. The things that they are into, were I twenty years younger, man, I could wade in there and really have a ball. It's hard work.

SENEY: You have been on the board of supervisors twice. It sort of brackets your career in the assembly and in congress. I don't know if anyone lobbied you in the sense when you were first on the board, or if they lobby you now when you are on the board. Certainly you were lobbied in congress. Could you make comparisons between these three, local, state, national levels?

CHAPPIE: When I first got on the board, nobody could spell lobbyist. [They] probably viewed it as a social disease. What the hell did you know in those days, 6,000 people around here all farmers and shit kickers? For fourteen years never, never any pressure groups. The big pressure group in this county was the Farm Bureau and the Grange. I think that tells us something.

SENEY: You were probably naturally inclined . . . toward them in any case.

CHAPPIE: Oh, yes. I was a member of both of the organizations, and that was our life blood in this county. That's all we had. A few tourists going to Tahoe when the road wasn't closed.

When I got to the assembly, why, obviously, and I got into it early. In those days, very candidly, Monroe Butler would call you at the Senator Hotel; he had a suite--his wife was [Senator Randolph] Randy Collier's sister--he was heavy into oil. [In those days] there were no constraints and if you--Gosh, what shall I say--behaved yourself, he had a little wall safe, and you'd go in for a nice dinner with the wife. It was command performance; if you didn't show, you didn't get invited again. Jesus, when Monroe called, you dropped everything. Dial the phone, "Hey, Mom, it's time for dinner with Monroe." Shoo. It was high level, a chance to put [on] the best suit. And when the evening was out, he'd go to the wall safe, and everybody would get a little envelope with long green, long green.

SENEY: How much would be in that envelope?

CHAPPIE: It depended. There was no reason for him to give me a sou because I wasn't from southern Cal where



the oil problems were. On the basis that if he needed a vote and he was right, and he was fair and honest, he never jerked you around, maybe a thousand bucks. That was heavy bread in those days.

SENEY: And you would receive these envelopes?

CHAPPIE: Yes.

SENEY: Was he the only one who did that or were there others who would do the same thing?

CHAPPIE: It was kind of the way to do it in those days. Virtually everyone did it. Gari [James D. Garibaldi], [Jefferson E.] Jeff Peyser of the Wine Institute, [Vincent D.] Vince Kennedy, Leroy with the god damn bow ties, he worked for the railroad industry . . .

SENEY: . . . Leroy [E.] Lyon [Jr.].

CHAPPIE: Leroy Lyon, my bosom buddy. And occasionally, Leroy would out of his own pocket buy you a round trip ticket on the choo-choo train to Reno. They would set the car on the siding, and you could gamble for the evening, you and the wife. Had your own accommodation in the pullman, and the next morning the engine would back up and hook up, and you'd be back in Sacramento. Oh, those were fun days.

SENEY: And that was all perfectly legal in these days.

CHAPPIE: Oh, yes, yes. Absolutely. Well, it's still legal today. This federal prohibition against taking freebies on any common carrier whether it be an airline, but I guess they have ways of doing it.

SENEY: I'm talking more about the cash that was received  
. . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Oh, yes, the cash. But you can still accept cash as long as you declare it.

SENEY: When did that end?

CHAPPIE: Prop. 9 [Proposition 9, June, 1974]

SENEY: Prop. 9 put an end to that.

CHAPPIE: That was the death knell of what I consider to be a good legislative process.

SENEY: You know you are not the only who has said that. Speaker Moretti as well has said that Proposition 9, which was the proposition voted in by the voters in 1974, did not do a great deal of good.<sup>1</sup>

CHAPPIE: That was Jerry Brown's. Yes, when he ran for the secretary of state [Governor]. He ran against the legislature, put Prop 9 on the ballot, and that was his election.

SENEY: And that virtually eliminated the kind of entertaining that the lobbyist used to do.

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Moretti, Legislative-Governor Relations in the Reagan Years: Five Views, 157.

CHAPPIE: Socializing.

SENEY: That's what you are talking about, isn't it?

CHAPPIE: Yes, yes. Moosemilk was really kind of a tradition. Every Thursday Moosemilk.

SENEY: Tell me what that means.

CHAPPIE: We used to meet at the El Mirador Hotel up on the top floor, and everyone was there. It was restricted to lobbyists, legislators. And you could sit down and have a drink with the president pro tem, old Garibaldi, or with Willie Brown, John Miller, whoever. Almost without exception 120 of us were there or a large, large percentage. Free food. Free booze. I don't think I ever heard a deal cut. There would be across the table Jim Mills who would say to Willie, "Well, what do you got new for us this week?" That type of camaraderie, flow of information. We would harass John Miller; he was the guy the Highway Patrol would stop every morning coming up the road a hundred miles an hour, you know. Then he would put in a bill to abolish the Highway Patrol.

Geez, it was just great. Like going to the neighborhood poker klatch, you know, once a month. Prop 9 come along and put a prohibition on spending, and then it got totally polarized.

Democrat. Republican. Spying. Bomb throwing. Geez, made you want to cry. You lost that ability to exchange information. Occasionally, some guy would say, "Chappie, if you are wise, just bury that turkey," and he would give you the number. Well, he was telling you something. Or, "Somebody's going to offer an amendment."

SENEY: These would be the lobbyist providing you with this kind of information.

CHAPPIE: Or the legislators . . .

SENEY: . . . In one of these social settings? . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Yeah, yeah, yeah from your district you'd get a ground swell of opposition or you'd say, "Geez, I can use that bill. I've got a little amendment, friend. What do you think?" You can't do that any more. [Laughter]

SENEY: So the lobbying must have changed as well after . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Oh, dramatically . . .

SENEY: Can you tell me how it changed after that proposition?

CHAPPIE: Well, obviously they have all these damn forms to fill out. And a lot of times lobbyists would call and say, "Gino, I got the prohibition." And I'd say, "I'll tell you what, we'll go Dutch."

SENEY: In other words, they had reached their limit on whether they could buy you lunch or not . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Or even talk to you at lunch. And a lot of them were nervous. You know I damn near got in a fist fight with one guy one night. My old aunt always said, "If you can sit down with the guys at the bar, make damn sure you got enough to buy a round or don't sit down." Maybe that's kind of corny these days, but I still believe in it.

One night I damn near got in a fight with a lobbyist. I said "OK, I'm buying."

"You can't do that." And he got pretty riled up. And I said, "Look, you, son of a bitch, if you can buy, I can buy, or you aren't going to talk to me no more. That's an insult. If I want to buy, that's my privilege. And if you don't want to drink, get your ass out of here."

I got into Senator [Bob] Wilson one night. I like to roll dice. I love to roll dice just to hear the noise and the fun and the excitement. We used to meet at the Sheepherder's, or whatever it was, and it was up on 21st and O or something. It was kind of a dump, but we'd go there and have a few drinks and dinner, and then we would go to the fights. [James Leo] Jim Frayne, who was a

lobbyist for CTLA [California Trial Lawyers Association] and a few other lobbyists, we'd get together, and within limitations, and we'd roll dice for drinks. Well, Bobby Wilson, God love him, was kind of a cheap screw. He was a state senator, and all at once, he's invited into the group--it was kind of a select group of fuck-offs, if you will--and the sucker would never shake. And this night I came in, and it had been a bad day and we shook for the drinks. One of the lobbyists loses, and Wilson has a drink. I get the dice and I say, "Bobby, you in the game?"

"No."

I say, "You ain't drinkin'."

"Why ain't I drinkin'?"

"Either you put up your money, or you shut up. And that's the rules, I got the dice." He took offense, and I chose him, and he wouldn't play, and he didn't drink. And to this day, he doesn't care much for me. God damn cheap screw. I live by a set of rules, if you're out with the boys, you're one of the boys, or you go home. Lobbyists are great guys.

SENEY: What you are describing here in terms of the social relationship of the legislators is something we see over and over again in the

interviews we do with people of the period of the fifties and the sixties and into the early seventies. It really appears to have changed, and you are making a gesture as though it's taken a dive down hill.

CHAPPIE: Yes, over the cliff. And I think the people are poorer for it, really. Really. CTA [California Teacher's Association], let's take those folks for example. They're heavy [influential]. And for a long period of time, they considered lobbyists to be the vilest of evil, but look what happened in the last few years now. They are so strong and potent, that they've tied education into the increase in the gas tax.<sup>1</sup> Ultimately, if you read that legislation, as I understand it, they are going to get the lion's share of that increase in the gas tax by indirection in tapping of the state sources. So if anything illustrates the value and perhaps the importance of a good advocacy program, there's one example.

And of course, people generally associated it with the evil--the oil industry, and the pesticide industry and all those environmental killers out there. The old folks in AARP

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<sup>1</sup>Proposition 111 (June, 1990).

[American Association of Retired Persons], for goodness sake. When you consider the impact seniors have on the legislative process. They've got some high-rolling lobbyists nowadays. They've also got some evil ones like Mr. Roosevelt, but that's another story.

SENEY: Which Mr. Roosevelt do you mean?

CHAPPIE: Jimmy.

SENEY: James Roosevelt.

CHAPPIE: Yes, yes. Sending out those lying letters, distorting facts, terrorizing people. He had to have made millions out of that. He got the little zinger that said, "Beware that the Congress is. . . ."

[End of Tape 5, Side B]

[Begin Tape 6, Side A]

SENEY: Indirectly you have done this because you have talked about Mr. James Roosevelt's lobbying congress. But I want you to compare the county, the state, and the congress in terms of lobbying and then maybe your experience now with the board of supervisors, if that's different.

CHAPPIE: I've said repeatedly and I will say it again there is no comparison between the caliber and the effectiveness of lobbying, no comparison whatsoever between California and the feds.



CHAPPIE: California is outstanding in the people that lobby issues. I found in D.C. that. . . . It's changing, it's changing and I think for the better. For so many years the quote-unquote lobbyists in D.C. would buy themselves a prestigious building, put some gold lettering on the door, and you never [could] find the sucker. Generally, an attorney that would obviously write back to the clients and say, "Don't sweat it, I've got everything under control, and I know Congressman So-and-So or Senator So-and-So." Very ineffective.

In California they work the halls. They work the offices. They establish a rapport with the legislators. And it's interesting to note the kid we talked about, P.J. [Paul Johnson] with Flashman-Hillard, he has applied that approach in D.C., and I think that contributes to their success in a very, very short span of time. They had set up PACs [political action committees] as part of the process. They are opening doors; they are establishing relationships--professional that is--with staffers and with the members. They have been very, very effective in where they place their PAC money. So there's a change now in D.C., and I think it is healthy too. I think

the thing that brought it home to me most was when I had a need to get a hold of Remington Firearms, and I looked them up in the lobbying book; back there it is about a foot thick. I found Remington and called on and off for about two days. It was kind of a burning issue with one of my constituents. And finally, I found a little secretary, very pleasant young woman. She said, "Oh, mercy, congressman." She said, "You didn't know."

And I said, "No, what happened?"

She said, "Well, Remington Firearms sold out to Dupont two years ago."

So then I found the proper guy in the Dupont hierarchy, who was another attorney who didn't know beans about what the hell the issue was. So there is, as I say, no comparison. Just total zilch back there.

SENEY: That's interesting because I think the popular assumption--obviously an uninformed one--would be that the lobbyists in Washington would be quite skillful.

CHAPPIE: Yes, like flies after a dead cow, but that is not the case. I found that the agricultural lobby was very effective. They had a very prestigious firm, but their lobbyist was a former staffer to

CHAPPIE: Congressman [Robert J.] Largomarsino. So he knew the issues, and he knew how to work the halls. Because of that change, I think some of the other lobbying firms are beginning to take a different approach. They're putting people on their feet.

And another one is the National Association of Counties, NACO. Jack Merlman, who used to be here in Sacramento, went back there. He walks the halls, and he'll come into your office. The bell rings, and he says, "Can I walk across the street with you?" They know how to lobby. While you're walking across the street to vote, he's getting in your ear and in your head. So there's a change, and I think it's healthy. I think it's health.

As it relates to the [El Dorado] county now, things have changed because we have different interests in the community. We have a number of large developers, and we have some very substantial clean industries--businesses I like to call them--in our business park. Copydata employs several hundred people; they have their own post office, put out millions of letters. They have attitudes as relates to future development. So they have a lobbyist, believe it or not, and they are a relatively new industry in

the computer age. We have some of the major developers on the west coast in this county now. In the short period of time that I've been on the board, I've encouraged them to get together and coalesce because of our water problem. They pressure. And some of them are a pain in the ass. And I've said to them, "Don't give me that crap. You may have a phone line to the governor's office or Senator Schmallowitz, but that crap ain't gonna wash in this county. Not while I'm around. And if you are going to lobby me, you are going to do it in high fashion, and it's going to be on the table."

SENEY: So what have they done that has caused you to lecture them and raise these objections?

CHAPPIE: They have manipulated the board in the past. There are rumors about that some of the politicians in the legislature own board members. Hot damn, that angers me. That well may be the case since I have been on the board, I've been able to kind of thwart some of those efforts. It's fun. But I have sat with a number of those developers and said, "This crap ain't going to continue, or I'm going to start throwing bombs."

Perhaps one of the best things to happen to us is this water thing where EID [El Dorado

Irrigation District] has opposed that moratorium.<sup>1</sup> The developers now recognize that they have a real plank in this community. They've got huge acreage down here, some of the best remaining open space in the state. And I'm saying, "If you want to develop it, by God, you are going to do it right. And we are not going to have strip development up Highway 50 like we have on Highway 80. Over my dead body."

We now talk about [the] Highway 50 corridor; we said in effect, "If you want to develop here, you have to provide a little buffer zone for the Highway 50 corridor." So we negotiated a 1,200 foot open space between the freeway and the first visible evidence that they would develop. That's the way it's going to be.

SENEY: Obviously the water problem is serious, particularly to the developers since the El Dorado Irrigation District is not issuing any new building permit. Have you gotten them to lobby at the state level and other places that's necessary to resolve this water problem? Are you doing that with them as well?

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<sup>1</sup>A moratorium on new construction due to lack of available water.

CHAPPIE: Good or bad, I chair the county water agency which is the umbrella agency in the county. There are some real, real personality problems between our agency and the EID board. There are twelve of us prima donnas. There's some very personable backbiting. I see my role as moderator and perhaps kind of a leveling influence. The media hasn't, I don't think, dealt with the issue fairly, but that's their problem. The president of their board and their manager and our manager and myself, meet almost daily; there are some people on both sides of this issue and the two agencies that say it has to be this project or that project by name. Well, I don't have any authorship, and I'm not involved with any particular project so our effort has been to say, "One, we are going to review what all our resources are, the availability of all the waters upstream. What are the available projects that are viable, feasible and that can be financed, that can be sold to the community?" The agency was derelict in that for a long period of time after I left the board; there was no staff. They'd meet once a month and put on the other hat that said "Supervisors" and become water agency directors and do nothing. Since I'm

back we are staffed; we have a manager that we stole from the legislature, a great guy. We have employed a prestigious engineering [firm] and legal [people]. So we are trying to get all elements together. We're dealing with all kinds of people: the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, Pacific Gas and Electric, City of Sacramento, Sacramento Municipal Utility District, Federal Energy Regulation Committee, all of these people. We're dealing with the County of Yuba, because they have surplus water and maybe we can provide an exchange. So we're trying to get all the elements put together, and then say to the people, "Here's what's available, here's what it's going to cost, and here's how we go about it." The perception is out there that we're still bombing one another. It's not the case. We're jointly funding this thing and really moving ahead. I think we're on track.

SENEY: It's a tough problem.

CHAPPIE: It's a bitch. Coupled with that the area you live in, Lake Tahoe, is water deficient. So we've been using county taxpayer monies through the agency to help STPUD [South Tahoe Public Utility District]. Off the subject.

SENEY: No, it's not. I mean it's all related in a way. But let me take you back to shift gears kind of significantly here.

CHAPPIE: OK.

SENEY: One of the things that was in your newsletters for several years, and it was a big issue, was the Free Speech Movement at Berkeley, and the question that you tried to deal with--and I'm not sure you were ever able to resolve it--and that is what is the legal definition of academic freedom? There was as a result of the agitation at Berkeley, a loss of school bond issues at the local level, that had bled over and was affecting local education. And one of the things that you did was to take a tour of the schools in your district.

CHAPPIE: That was a bitch. [Laughter]

SENEY: And you wrote a letter to your constituents, and may I compliment you, I thought that was a wonderful piece.<sup>1</sup>

CHAPPIE: Formed the student council.

SENEY: Yes, that's right.

CHAPPIE: Hauled them to Sacramento at my own expense.

SENEY: Tell me about that.

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<sup>1</sup>Eugene A. Chappie Papers.



CHAPPIE: Well, I guess I got into that because it kind of saddened me. I couldn't lay all the blame on the kids. It was a period of turmoil. I guess I got involved basically because I didn't have that much education. And I'm saying, "Jesus, the whole damn thing is going down the drain." People throwing urine on the governor, and students doing, in the view of the adults, bad things, and the parents reacting violently. I just figured I had an obligation. I visited thirty-two high school campuses and all the community colleges in the district. Hell, it took me five weeks. I didn't hardly get home in that time, believe it or not. I was trying to find out what was precipitating all this; how we could bring kids out of that tendency to be violent into a room and sit down and let them vent their spleen and then perhaps develop or devise a method to direct their energies in a more purposeful direction. I learned a lot. I think to a small degree it helped to quiet the riot. I found over in Charlie Brown High School in Shoshoni where the screech owls screw the chickens, those kids were in an uproar. You ever been to Shoshoni?

SENEY: No

- CHAPPIE: Hey, hey. It's a two-day journey. It was in my assembly district. It was named after Senator [Charles] Charlie Brown from Shoshoni.
- SENEY: In the letter you wrote, you indicate tremendous sympathy for the students. For example, we've talked already about your ban on miniskirts in the capitol, but here you seemed to have come to the realization that probably it was all right for these kids to dress a little differently, to have their hair a little longer . . .
- CHAPPIE: . . . I had five of them. You know, I listen to the conversation, the dialogue around the table, and we had a lot of nerds in the educational community. You know when a succession of five kids come home and say, "Mr. Jones is a jerk." Where there's smoke, there's fire. And ultimately, you find out Mr. Jones was not only a jerk, he was a super jerk.
- SENEY: In your letter you show very little sympathy for administrators as a matter of fact.
- CHAPPIE: They were very insensitive. Many of them were martinets; they took a punitive approach--"I'll show those little bastards." Boy, that was an experience.
- SENEY: You went and discussed with the students what their concerns were. There was a real sense of

understanding. You get now to the administrators and the teachers and you suggest--I think you state not suggest--that they weren't really so interested in the kids. They were really interested in their budgets.

CHAPPIE: Yes.

SENEY: They were not interested in resolving the turmoil in the schools in a positive way, but suppressing it, so it wouldn't become a public relations problem which would cost them at budget time.

CHAPPIE: That's right. That was my perception [that they were interested in their budgets], and it was unfortunate. Then we got into that era where we mandated that you couldn't have more than one administrator to how many teachers? The era of [Assemblyman] Leo [J.] Ryan. I think that reflected some of the things that I learned from that tour.

Geez, I got down to Consumnes River College in Columbia. This was the beginning of some of the post Korea thing [Korean War, 1950-1953] when young housewives were coming back to college. And some donkey got up, and we got into the pot issue and she made a statement to the effect that "Well," she says, "I cook a lot of spaghetti. My old man really likes spaghetti. And when I make

sauce why I throw a little of that green stuff in there, and the old man's ashucking and ajogging and he don't know. . . ." And one gal damn near faints. The thought that some kid would put marijuana in the spaghetti sauce. [Laughter] Geez, there were some real bomb throwers. God, that was fun. But that student council . . .

SENEY: . . . Well, you had two students from each high school and from each college in your district.

CHAPPIE: We brought them in at our expense. We brought in Reagan's director of education. We brought in [Assemblywoman] March Fong [Eu]. We brought in black legislators. The whole meld of the legislative process. And we had rap sessions into the wee hours. Of course, then I lost the district [as a result of redistricting in 1974], but I felt that was a very meaningful exercise. I think those kids went back with a little better feel for the governmental process, and the fact that there were people that were concerned and were to a degree on their side, willing to listen.

SENEY: Well, this struck me, if I may say so, as unusual but impressive for you to do this. Here is a legislator in a district . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . I'd forgotten all about it, to tell you the truth . . .

SENEY: . . . who sees a problem and who doesn't really understand it, he thinks, so goes out and informs himself and has his mind in the process.

CHAPPIE: That was a real learning experience, I'll tell you.

SENEY: Was this your general approach to problems in the legislature? Did you . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Still is today. We recently had a road problem in the district. Departments have a capacity for screwing things up. It is on a major arterial, commuters from the district to Sacramento. They had built a school in the worst goddamn place in the county, right at a major intersection, a death trap. So the county says, "OK. We are going to spend six million dollars and try and correct the mistake the educators made," or the board of trustees not the educators.

Then the next shot is, you engineer the thing, and you fight with property owners. They come to the board and say, "We can't negotiate. Let's condemn them." That's an anathema to me.

Then the next shot is, we are going to shut the road for seventy-five days from 8:00 in the

CHAPPIE: morning. . . . I mean the roof comes in. And this is at the board level [El Dorado Board of Supervisors]. So I say, "There ain't going to be no condemnation. I want to sit down with the property owners." I go down to the road department. In two hours I resolved the problem. The first time these people had a chance to confront the engineer, the director of transportation, and a supervisor. And I grew up with most of these guys. I said, "Come on. Let's stop this nonsense. This is what we can do. This is what you can do, or we got to go to war. And I don't want to go to war." In two hours we resolved the problem. They all sign off. Honest to God.

Then the next issue is the seventy-five day closure. So I said, "Let's go into the lion's den." I call a public hearing in Lotus; seventy-five people show up. And I say, "There ain't gonna be no war. I'm here to seek your advise and counsel, and I'll do it in a friendly fashion, but don't forget I'm Italian. I'm going to walk out of here with a solution." The solution is we end up closing the road for fifteen days. We give the contract a \$25,000 bonus if they can meet that requirement. So I

eliminate sixty days of closure. It's their idea. How the hell can they fight it?

You got to get involved with people at where the problem is. They'll do it. There's no other way for me.

SENEY: Another major issue during the period you were in the legislature was taxes. I suppose it's always a major issue, but here Mr. Reagan comes in, and we have an era of pretty high public support for high taxes and high spending. Under Pat Brown a great deal was done. Mr. Reagan comes in with his promise to cut, squeeze and trim and he has a variety of tax proposals. One of the things that was debated and finally resolved was whether or not there would be income tax withholding. And finally there was withholding . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Cement was cracking . . .

SENEY: . . . Around his feet. [Laughter] That's right. That famous phrase, "What you hear is the sound of cement cracking around my feet," said Governor Reagan. Another issue was to raise the sales tax and property tax relief, and there were several other issues. There was an attempt in the legislature to resolve all this.<sup>1</sup> There was

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<sup>1</sup>A.B. 1000 and A.B. 1001, 1970-1971 Reg. Sess. dealt with income, sales, oil depletion, bank and corporation, income tax withholding, property and business taxes.

then the Watson initiative,<sup>1</sup> the tax collector from Los Angeles. That was on the ballot in 1972 [Proposition 14] and was defeated. You, in one of your letters, said you thought that was not a bad idea; you didn't have a position, but you advised your constituents to look carefully at it. That failed.

Mr. Reagan comes along in 1973 and suffers his only really major political defeat of his career, I think, losing Proposition 1<sup>2</sup> and then along come a lot more attempts in the legislature to resolve problems. And then comes Proposition 13<sup>3</sup> Could you run through those for me and give me your perspective on all that tax business that went on?

CHAPPIE: It's hard to relate to that because we had a succession of finance directors, Gordon Smith, Cap Weinberger, and then Vern Orr. There were only three.

That was a time when Reagan was having a hard time communicating with the legislature. There was really no communication at all . . .

SENEY: . . . During his first term.

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<sup>1</sup>Proposition 14 (November 1972).

<sup>2</sup>Proposition 1 (November 1973).

<sup>3</sup>Proposition 13 (June 1978).



CHAPPIE: Yes. Then the right-wingers, I guess the only way I can describe them, the [Paul Gann] Ganns and the [Howard Jarvis] Jarvises, principally Jarvis. They seemed to come in at just the optimum time, caught the public fancy, the inability of the legislature to do anything but spend, spend, spend and tax, tax, tax. And I think that was the real basis of that whole movement. But I guess, to be honest with you, most of those things were peripheral issues with me. With the eleven counties, it was always pick and shovel, local problems, county problems, city problems. I never got involved in any of the great debates and introducing legislation of, you know, statewide significance. Those are pretty sexy issues, and generally the chairman of the particular committee always grabbed the ball with that because, they had the staff, and they ran that sort of bill; Moretti, and the Finance and Insurance, for example.

I never got very involved in that stuff. Certainly I supported Jarvis. Hell, you had to. [Laughter] You had no choice.

SENEY: You didn't take any part then in the 1973 campaign when Governor Reagan worked so hard for

Proposition 1, and Moretti essentially beat him, I think.

CHAPPIE: Yes. Moretti clobbered him. No, I stayed out of that. For what reason I couldn't tell you at this point.

SENEY: Let me ask you a question that has some bearing on this, and that is, one of the ways that you kept in touch with your constituency was through questionnaires,<sup>1</sup> and you sent them out regularly and got many responses, over 10,000 responses in many cases . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . That gave me a good excuse to write them another letter . . .

SENEY: . . . And you did say at one point that you are not trying to convince them of your point of view, but you want to understand their point of view . . .

CHAPPIE: Well, I'd said, "There ought to be a law. What do you think we should enact by way of a new law?"

SENEY: You must have considered this questionnaire to be a very valuable tool because you continued all throughout your career in the assembly to use it.

CHAPPIE: It was one of the few tactics. . . . You couldn't believe the mail we got. "By God, you're the first guy who ever asked my opinion."

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<sup>1</sup>Eugene H. Chappie Papers.

A lot of times you didn't really want or need their opinion, but by God, they wrote back that they felt they were a part of the process. Oft times I'd write back and say, "Well, I appreciate your comments, but I think you're wrong, and these are the reasons." So you started a dialogue. A lot of times I would drive, by driving around 125,000 miles a year, I'd stop in with some of these cats way out in the brush. It was great, great. I developed some friendships [that have lasted] to this day. I got a letter from a ninety-year-old gal the other day. We're back to politics. Hooray. [Laughter]

SENEY: Well, one of the things that was a common staple in the questionnaire, was a question about taxes, and you wanted to know what did they think about withholding, did they want that. Most of them did, as a matter of fact.

CHAPPIE: They did, yes, which surprised me no end.

SENEY: Did it? Maybe it was highly personal. I mean it's much easier to take a little out of each paycheck than it is to dole it out on April 15.

CHAPPIE: . . . Yeah, some of my shots, just to peek at it a little bit, was to come to town today, and I say I heard this guy saying, "Man, I just got

\$900 back from the federal government. Isn't that neat?"

But my thought is, isn't it neat that the federal government has denied me the use of that \$900 for a year or more, and I could have invested it somewhere or gone to the bar and bought a six pack? And then that would start another dialogue.

SENEY: Well, it was an interesting technique, and it was one you obviously felt was valuable because, as I say, you clearly use it on a regular basis, and in fact, toward the end of the time in the legislature, your newsletters really began to be more in the form of these questionnaires and the subsequent analysis of the questionnaires which you would send back to them.

CHAPPIE: And it was obvious that we pursued that because we got very favorable comments. Very favorable, Democrat and Republican alike. And I used them, perhaps not as much, but I used them a good bit in congress too.

SENEY: Times would change, and so the questions would change. Early on there were questions about academic freedom and problems at the university. Those were dropped as that ceased to be an issue. Another set of questions then began to be asked

by you, had to do with the environment which became an important subject matter.

CHAPPIE: Yes, but I was an environmental killer.

[Laughter]

SENEY: Well, but that's not the impression I got from your comments in the letters or from the legislation which you sponsored.

CHAPPIE: Oh, but the posey pluckers branded me.

SENEY: How would you brand yourself?

CHAPPIE: Always my initial response is, "I've farmed all my life. If you don't take care of Mother Nature, she ain't gonna take care of you."

Yes, we've gotten into the controversies over timber harvesting. That's a renewable resource. I think I lead the charge at Lake Tahoe. There aren't too many people who wanted to touch that because the locals were, in effect, saying, "Leave us alone. Get the hell out of the basin. We know what's good for ourselves." But they didn't. They were screwing the basin up, really. Ravaging it. Even though I have a picture, a photograph, of Lake Tahoe with one pine tree on the horizon--in that entire basin--when the silver mines were working. So you see Mother Nature does restore itself, but,

nonetheless, you don't have to rape it periodically to start that process.

A lot of other issues. I was the guy that carried legislation for the State Forester's Act<sup>1</sup> that requires the timber management plan,<sup>2</sup> requires the employment of a registered forester,<sup>3</sup> that whole bit. And I had to fight like hell to get that through the legislature. I feel pretty comfortable with my environmental record.

SENEY: Let me give credit in a slightly broader context and get you to comment on it. Speaker Monagan appointed a select committee on the environment when he was speaker in 1969-1970, and that clearly had a political connotation to it and that is the Republicans had to make sure that they did not get left behind on the environmental issue. Did you have that feeling too? Is that part of your motivation in this regard? You realize this is an issue on which you better be on the right side or you would be vulnerable?

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<sup>1</sup>SS West's Annotated California Codes, see 750 et. seq.

<sup>2</sup>A.B. 2065, 1971-1972 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 1226 (1972).

A.B. 2105, 1977-1978 Reg. Sess. (1978).

<sup>3</sup>A.B. 469, 1971-1972 Reg. Sess. Cal. Stat., ch. 800 (1972).

CHAPPIE: No, no. This was a personal thing with me. I never got into that bag of the image. Hell, you create an image by doing. You don't have to get out there and pontificate and try and catch up with what you projected as an image. I used to swear at [Assemblyman Peter B.] Pete Wilson. You know he was the father of the [California] Coastal Commission<sup>1</sup>. I held my nose; he and Monagan both twisted my arm on that one. I had some real, real concerns with it. Some of them came to pass, granted. Perhaps in the larger picture it was good, but I was a little concerned in the manner in which it was handled.

[End Tape 6, Side A]

[Begin Tape 6, Side B]

SENEY: The environmental issue was a politically important one. And I got the feeling the Republicans generally covered themselves pretty well on that and didn't leave themselves very vulnerable, and I'm not talking about you so much but I'm talking about statewide.

CHAPPIE: Oh, I think they did a good job of it, and it was due to Monagan's foresight and his ability to anticipate the issues.

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<sup>1</sup>Proposition 20 (November 1972).

SENEY: I want to ask you about some other things that happened while you were in the legislature. These have to do with the assembly and, of course, the senate too, but the assembly as an institution because it changed considerably when you were there. There were staff additions that were brought in the mid sixties. There was the salary increase when Proposition 1-A<sup>1</sup> was passed. You went from \$6,000 to \$16,000 a year, if I recollect correctly. There were two-year sessions that were adopted in 1972,<sup>2</sup> something you were in favor of. The recording of roll call votes [in committee] was another reform. I wonder if you would comment on those things, essentially the professionalism of the legislature, becoming a full-time, well-paid, year-round, heavily-staffed body?

CHAPPIE: Well, when I first went down there, some people questioned my mental process. I was making \$850 a month here as a supervisor, and I went there for \$500 a month. We met every other year. I can tell even with my limited knowledge at the time, that every other year sessions didn't get it because we got into that syndrome of calling

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<sup>1</sup>Proposition 1-A (November 1966).

<sup>2</sup>Proposition 4 (November 1972).



CHAPPIE:    them special sessions.  You were there, and things kept getting longer, longer, longer.  It wasn't a good system in that 80 percent of the members were attorneys.  Who the hell could afford to work for \$500 dollars a month and disrupt whatever else you were doing trying to make a livelihood?  At the end of the session, why [Laughter] some of the members would sell their law books to finance their trip home.  It was bad.  So I supported the first two-year session.

          And Unruh in his efforts to bring some professionalism short-circuited a lot of things.  He got into the per diem thing.  Hell, that was a license to steal, in effect.  Committee hearings coming out of kazoo.  My first term down there I spent twenty-one days in L. A. flying back and forth.  And they would program committees so that you'd have at least two committees that you served on at the same day in L. A. so that you could fly down there and rush over to committee A and collect your mileage, per diem.  Then you could go to committee B, and if you were smart, you could do the same thing with that one.

          In those days they were paying you fifteen cents a mile, and it cost you five cents to fly

CHAPPIE: so you were making money, you were stealing, in effect. He then got into the lease car bit, everything to circumvent what the law was. And some of that's still carried over to this day, but most of it's gone, and that's good. And so I guess in our efforts to try and clean up the act--I knew a lot of money changed hands which was bad--in an effort to clean the act a little bit, why we said, "Well, let's go to a two-year session." That helped.

I had some concern with the proliferation of staff [after 1966]. Good God, I mean, you had them coming out kazoo, and it's worse now. It never quits. The whole gaggle of committees, sub-committees, ad hoc committees, select committees. It's getting damn near as bad as the congress. And then when you went to annual sessions, why that was supposed to improve the process, but I don't know if it did or not. Hindsight is great.

But there was obviously a very marked improvement because when we went to the two-year sessions [1972], all at once most of the attorneys are gone. You got dentists, doctors, farmers, shoe clerks, educators. You really had

a much better meld or cross section of the populace. So I think that was very good.

SENEY: I've seen comments that when it went to a full-time and professional operation, the legislators who lived in other areas, San Diego, Los Angeles, Long Beach, and so forth, would move their families up here and put them in school.

CHAPPIE: They could afford it.

SENEY: Right. And while that might have been good for their home life, it was not very good for the legislature in the sense that these very same people used to stay in hotels, used to rent apartments together, socialize a great deal, and that helped to further the kind of rapport you discussed earlier. Do you agree with that?

CHAPPIE: That's correct. When I got there, in the good old days, quote unquote, hell, Monagan, Veneman, and Bagley all bunked together. Of course, I was fortunate, I could commute, you know. A lot of nights I stayed down. For a while I think Moretti [a Democrat] and [Assemblyman Jerry] Lewis [a Republican] bunked together. So you had bipartisan bunking, if you will. It was great. Jogging in the park in your PJs. [Laughter]

SENEY: I want to ask you about your committee assignments because those changed. You were

committee chairman only for four of the first four years; from '66 to '70, you were Welfare chairman [1966-1968] and Rules Committee chairman [1968-1970]. Then in 1971 you became vice chairman of the Local Government Committee, and you also served on Government Administration, Planning and Land Use and on Intergovernmental Relations Committee. You indicated in one of your newsletters that those were all things that you had asked Moretti for. He had given you your choices. Why choose these particular committees? Local government I certainly understand.

CHAPPIE: Governmental Administration used to oversee county fairs. Planning and Land Use, problems: Tahoe, eleven counties, many municipalities. What the hell was the last one?

SENEY: The last one was Intergovernmental Relations.

CHAPPIE: That was the fun committee. God, we have to have a little fun. That oversaw the National Guard, and we used to fly hither and yon, and look at military installations and make sure they were properly housed and clothed. That was kind of the fun committee. And as a matter of fact, Moretti put me on that because he said, "Gino, I've got some real crazies on that one, and I need your help."

Oft times they were prone to get off the reservation, get a little hammered up, miss the plane, end up in the wrong bedroom and all that. So I was getting some salt on my collar irons. He kind of looked at me as the father of some of these cats. See, some of the young kids were really--whew--first time away from home. You know like the military. So that was a fun committee, but the others I obviously had a reason, with all those county fairs, wanting to make sure they kept getting their money. Of course, when I got on to Ways and Means, then I really had a chance to keep a handle on it.

SENEY: Well, that begins in '73, because your committee assignments change, you drop Local Government, and you become vice chair of Planning and Land Use. Again that would be the Tahoe business.

CHAPPIE: Yeah. Principally . . .

SENEY: And you're off of Governmental Administration, but now you're on Joint Fair Allocations and Classifications so you're keeping your hand on the fairs . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Absolutely . . .

SENEY: . . . which we discussed before which are important in a rural district. You become a member of Ways and Means and the Joint

Legislative Budget. And I'm sorry if I said you were no longer on the Local Government, I stated it incorrectly. You were no longer vice chairman.

CHAPPIE: That's right. I was on it from day one to the last day, well almost to the last day.

SENEY: Well, you know Ways and Means is pretty much a plum committee, isn't it? I mean that's one of the ones you fight for; and then not only Ways and Means, but then you're on the Joint Legislative Budget Committee. Did those come together?

CHAPPIE: Pretty much.

SENEY: Was that a package appointment?

CHAPPIE: Kind of a package thing. Well, I guess I'd gotten a little seniority, a little time. Both sides knew I didn't play games, that I worked hard. I used to terrorize my sub-committee chairman. I put [Assemblyman John Kenyon] Ken MacDonald in the hospital, and I felt badly about it: one, no sense of humor, and two, stress. I loved to stress them.

SENEY: You're smiling when you say that.

CHAPPIE: Well, [Assemblyman John F.] Dunlap, for example. He used to come in from Napa. You never knew where the hell he was coming from. Anyhow, it

was a three-person committee and the opening day I would say, "OK, now you're the chair, and we don't have any vice chair, but I've been here longer than you. And the first time you're late, I grab the hammer, and whatever we do, you ain't gonna undo." It used to drive them crazy. He would drive a hundred miles an hour, he'd go without sleep just to get there and not have me have the hammer. A couple of times, I got him good. Well, then McDonald succeeded him. And we had all the throw-away money buying all the coast of California, all the parks, you couldn't believe all the money we had.

SENEY: This was the Ways and Means . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Yes, subcommittee, yes. And we would start at eight in the morning, hammer and tong, three days a week, you know. By this time, why we had staffed up to where I had minority staff and we'd sit around and connive over beer at night and say, "Now what can we do to McDonald and the Democrats?" just to kind of keep them honest, you know. And we would just keep dropping these little blips in on him.

And one day, MacDonald said, "Chappie, I've had all I can stand of you." And he just adjourned the committee, and he had a heart

seizure, and they put him in the hospital. I went out to the hospital and brought him a head of cabbage with a bottle of vodka in it. We made up.

SENEY: I take it when you refer to this subcommittee, you were overseeing certain departments in state government that were your responsibility.

CHAPPIE: We went through the budget, line item by line item.

SENEY: There were several other bodies that you were also on in 1973. You may have been on them earlier, but this is the first reference that I notice. One was the Commission on the Status of Women.

CHAPPIE: God love Bobby Moretti.

SENEY: He put you on that?

CHAPPIE: He said, "Gino, you son of a bitch." He said, "I haven't done you a favor; I can't get anybody to serve on this god-damn commission." And I said, "OK, if it will help you." And of course, the more liberal element of the Commission on Women, because of the miniskirt thing and this impression of a chauvinist, no good, S-O-B, I chummed them a little bit, and I got to be a very staunch ally. When they couldn't get a quorum, guess who they called. And I'd go up there and



listen to [Assemblywoman] Maxine Waters just vilify those white broads. I shouldn't say that, but that's what she called them. She would just give them a ration of shit you couldn't believe. And I'm moderating, a loveable Italian.

SENEY: What sort of issues were discussed?

CHAPPIE: Oh, all kinds. All the women issues: equal rights, equal pay. They were in the forefront. At the outset, you used to get a lot of snide remarks. I mean, they'd just cut me. By God, there was blood all over the floor, but second time around they went in and asked them to reappoint me. I had a lot of fun, and much to their surprise and chagrin, I voted for the ERA [Equal Rights Amendment]. Oh, whoopee.

SENEY: When it was in the congress?

CHAPPIE: In the assembly.

SENEY: Another one you were on was the Commission of the Californias.

CHAPPIE: I still am.

SENEY: And that has to do with our relationship with Mexico.

CHAPPIE: And now the Southwest Quarter Conference. So it had an international aspect, really. It's pretty heavy stuff. We have an office in Mexico City. I developed some great friendships in Baja Norte

and Baja Sur. Yeah, we just had a meeting here about two months ago. Moretti first put me on that and then McCarthy [when he was speaker], and now I'm the governor's appointee. At that time I was one of the legislature's appointees.

SENEY: Another one you were on, and this has to do with an interest of yours, that's the Heritage Preservation Commission. You were author of legislation having to do with the membership and so forth.<sup>1</sup> Tell me about this one.

CHAPPIE: Yeah, I'm kind of a history buff, the Mother Lode, the Golden Chain, and all that stuff. Ruthie Clark from Twain Harte, God love her, she was just an activist, not only in the Republican party but in terms of heritage and historical societies, this whole nine yards.

It's one of those things where somebody comes up and says, "Gino, I got a little problem here, and, by God, nobody will pay attention to it. It's real important." So you take a look at it. It's like motherhood, and you have this whole gaggle of people that are another source of votes. I'm being very, very callous now, but a special interest group. It's clean, and it has

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<sup>1</sup>33 West's Annotated California Codes, sec. 12231. Otherwise unable to verify.

to be done. So you just say, "OK. Tell me what you want in the bill." And I take them down to Leg [Legislative] Counsel, and he drafts the bill. We go.

SENEY: You gave me a large volume of newspaper clippings as well as a<sup>1</sup> . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . I did? [Laughter]

SENEY: You did, yes. [Laughter] Now they are only for, unfortunately, '77, '78, and '79. It is a rather large scrapbook, also a volume of photographs--glossy photographs. And many of these have you out inspecting, dedicating, looking over some historic preservation site in your district.

CHAPPIE: Including Ophir Prison. Not including Ophir Prison, but we have preserved it for posterity. The monument.

SENEY: And it never existed.

CHAPPIE: God, that was one of the fun trips of my life. You got a minute?

SENEY: Sure.

CHAPPIE: My barber, Sweet William [Slade], is an absolute crazy, but he has a mind that never ceases. We saved the pup fish. I am internationally famous, in the National Geographic. We started out as a lark. Bumper strips--Save the Pupfish--and all

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<sup>1</sup>Eugene A. Chappie Papers.

at once, what the hell are pupfish? Well, that was another issue.

Ophir State Prison, we decided we had to save the first nonexistent prison in California. So there would be pictures in the local papers of Willie and me poking around in blackberry brambles; we discovered the first warden's cap. It was a streetcar conductor's hat.

SENEY: So this was a fraud.

CHAPPIE: Oh, man, of the first water. We had big badges. We had membership, "Save Ophir Prison" committee. We gathered funds, and we found the first electric chair, prior to producing electricity. We had telephone insulators on it, leather straps.

SENEY: [Laughter]

CHAPPIE: Then we found some horse manure from the first warden's horse. Various artifacts . . .

SENEY: . . . So these would be press releases . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Oh, yeah . . .

SENEY: . . . announcing these historic finds.

CHAPPIE: And we had television pieces taking place in the tonsorial parlor. So finally . . .

SENEY: . . . Let me ask you. Did the press know they were being defrauded? Or did these television people know?

CHAPPIE: Hell, no. I mean straight, straight-faced. And our bumper strips, and we put them in elevators. We had matchbooks. I mean full-blown campaign. And geez, this thing kept gaining momentum. Finally, we said, "God, we got to do something with it." So we decided to erect an historic marker to commemorate the site.

We located the site. We went to the owner of the property and said, "Will you deed us a five-by-five-by-five-piece of ground, five-foot square." No big thing. He gives us the grant deed. We go to the planning commission and we ask for a change to a historical zoning. Straight-faced, pay our fees. Then we get the drunken [E. Clampus Vitus] Clampers to erect this huge stone monument with all kinds of memorabilia imbedded in it--a big bronze plaque-- and we generate the flowers and the whole bit. We invite the E. Clampus Vitus to dedicate it. We had 1,500 people in red shirts, media. I fly in, in a helicopter. We had ten high school bands.

SENEY: [Laughter]

CHAPPIE: Absolute pandemonium in downtown Newcastle. They had never seen anything like it since the gold rush. I have pictures of fighting for the

monument. It's still there. People drive by.

"Oh, historical Ophir State Prison." [Laughter]

CHAPPIE: Sacramento now has the Ophir State Prison  
Marching Band.

SENEY: Is that right?

CHAPPIE: Out of Sac State. They are quite famous.

SENEY: And do they know this is a fraud?

CHAPPIE: . . . Who cares?

[End Tape 6, Side B]

[Session 4, April 10, 1990]

[Begin Tape 7, Side A]

SENEY: I want to ask you about your relationship with the Jerry Brown administration [Edmund G. Brown, Jr., Governor of California, 1975-1983]. I want to start by asking you about a particular issue in your district. That was the Walt Disney Enterprise's Independence Lake project.

CHAPPIE: That was quite an interesting exercise. The Disney people approached us prior to floating the thing publicly. Because of my strong feelings for local government, I then immediately got in touch with the members of the Board [of Supervisors] in Sierra County, the planning department, and some local movers and shakers that really knew what was going on in the county, and we found they were receptive. On that basis, we began a series of meetings between representatives of Disney and the affected county departments. Ultimately, we got into a series of public hearings.

Considering the size of Sierra County at the time, I thought they did an excellent job in terms of reviewing the project and then going through the process of community hearings--the big debates. Generally speaking, there was enthusiastic support in the county. It would have been a destination, a recreational community. Actually, one of the things that attracted me to it was the fact that it would have relieved some of the pressures on the Tahoe basin. At that time, if memory serves, OPR, Office of Planning and Research, was under the governor's wing. I can't recall, but I think Bill Press was a director at that time. Of course, ultimately, the Sierra Club, and I have a suspicion that a lot of Jerry's minions, led the charge against it. And finally, it just got mired down in an absolute mess, and Disney just walked away from it. It just wasn't worth the exercise.

SENEY: One of the people mentioned as sort of a negative force here in disapproving the project was Huey [D.] Johnson, the Resources Secretary.

CHAPPIE: Screwy Huey as I affectionately called him. Well, he was like an unguided missile, you never knew where the hell he was coming from.



[Laughter] Good grief, he was about half way scared of me. We used to get into some real conversations. And he was, as were many of Jerry's appointees, [someone who said] "Stop the world right here; we'll not even discuss these issues."

Then again I think that would have been a great project; they had the money, it was just a super job of planning; the Forest Service was supportive. Virtually, everyone wanted it except, I guess, Press and old Screwy Huey. He did that to a lot of things that were proposed. Even in the state parks system, we always had a few problems with him.

SENEY: Did you consider him to be competent in terms of his job? Was it a problem of competence or just point of view that was so different?

CHAPPIE: Oh, I can't say that he was an idiot. He was just off on a totally different track. I would suspect that he was well-qualified in terms of recreational planning and things of that nature, but he was just of a bent that says, "That's the end of it. We'll not proceed any further." Preservationist, preservationist. He got locked into that. Even the Democrats had a terrible time with him.

He had one of these swinging chairs hooked to the ceiling in his office up on the fifteenth floor of the Resources building. And he would sit there and swing back and forth, you know. Hot dog! One day I was up there with a friend of mine, and I suggested that if he could get the window open, I'd launch him.

Yeah, Huey kind of shied clear of me. He used to wear different colored socks. [Laughter] Word had it he bought his clothes out of the second-hand store. A real space cadet. I enjoyed him. A great target.

SENEY: One of the pictures, sort of album pictures you let me look at, had to do with dedication of the Meridian bridge between Sutter and Colusa counties in 1977.<sup>1</sup> You and several local officials were there, and there were speeches made and so forth. You weren't quoted, but the other ones were quoted that they were lamenting the redirection of state highway funds away from highways toward mass transit. There was some feeling that maybe this was one of the last bridge openings that there would be in this particular area. I wonder what views you had about the way in which highway funds were spent

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<sup>1</sup>Eugene A. Chappie Papers.

and the highway department directed during the Jerry Brown administration.

CHAPPIE: Well, if one were to have taken that seriously, you know, you'd have gone out and shot yourself in the foot because Adriana [Gianturco] was dedicated to just totally dismantling the highway department. It was Cal Trans then, not Department of Transportation. She just virtually compelled ten of the eleven district engineers to say, "The hell with it," and they quit. They retired; a lot of them took early retirement, just baled out because they could not put up with the nonsense that she was mandating. The only one who stuck it out was Leo Trombatore, and he ultimately succeeded her and got Cal Trans back on the track, in terms of at least trying to catch up on maintenance.

The thing was we were in a real inflationary spiral during that period, and she kept banking the money. Well, hell, it just melted away because the dollars lost their value. There was nothing by way of projects on the shelf. God, there were some death traps in the highway system, and she just turned her back on them. We continued to kill people and expand the gridlock. At least if she had said, "Well, OK. We aren't

going to build any more freeways. . . ." I still have visions of some of them--the overpass that is hanging there suspended in mid-air, and there's no one around to complete it.

If she had at least said, "Well, we will continue to maintain what we have so that it doesn't totally go to hell." But you just could not reason with that woman. She virtually dismantled a great team of engineers and planners in the transportation area. And we are still trying to fight our way back up out of that mess.

SENEY: You actually took her up into your district and had her take a look directly at the problems.

CHAPPIE: Oh, a number of times. Yeah, we had a blood alley there on Highway 49, total gridlock in Grass Valley, Nevada City, if you can believe it, because of the need for the Highway 20 by-pass to Marysville. We finally convinced her in those two instances, but it took years.

Good grief, what in prior times would have taken a week or two, you could have had a member of the Highway Commission up there or the Director of Transportation and said, "Hey, here's the problem. What can we do?" It would have been up or down. But you constantly had the balls in the air. You never knew where the hell you were.

We got those two finished, but it just took forever, forever. And about the time we got one of them finished, why it was outdated. Goddamn. Oh, well.

SENEY: There was another appointee of Jerry Brown's who was quite controversial, Rose [Elizabeth] Bird. I am not speaking of her as Chief Justice . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . But she had . . .

SENEY: . . . Agriculture . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Ag and Services. And at that time I served on the Ag Committee with [Assemblyman] John [E.] Thurman. We got into this big hassle over Caesar Chavez which was right during that period. She didn't know what a labor contractor was. And I was still actively farming at the time, and I was hiring wetbacks, and Caesar Chavez was tromping around the fields and just terrorizing everyone. We found, for example, that--documented too--some of her employees were using state vehicles to transport Chavez and his terrorists around. You couldn't believe the crap that was coming down.

On two or three occasions Thurman and I--I think I was vice chair at the time--went over and met with her. Geez, if you thought it was difficult communicating with Adriana [Gianturco], this gal was off on a whole different plane. You

absolutely could not get her to sit down and reason and listen to the laments of the ag community. She just had her mind made up, and that was it.

SENEY: I don't think there was much argument that Adriana Gianturco was knowledgeable about transportation . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Oh, yeah . . . . .

SENEY: . . . But would you say that about Rose Bird when it came to agriculture? Did she know the field?

CHAPPIE: She didn't know a cucumber from a kumquat, really. Just totally, totally out of her element. There again, it caused some real problems for the ag community. Really bad.

SENEY: There was one case where you were successful. This was with the [Department of] Game and Fish Department when there was drought problems in 1977. You got them, up in Lassen County, to cut their water demands from 70 to 63 percent. It was quite beneficial to your farmers. How was that different--that controversy--from the one's you've been telling me?

CHAPPIE: Well, we had a guy in Fish and Game that had gone through the ranks, and he knew how the system worked.

SENEY: I'm sorry I said Lassen County. The man's name was [Robert] Lassen. It was actually Yuba County.

CHAPPIE: Yeah, Yuba County because we had some problems with the DeGarrett Dam. It was kind of the aftermath when, what the hell was it, the flood in '64, they weren't able to get the works rebuilt fast enough. But Lassen was a career guy. He had come up through the ranks, and he could understand the problems. Granted we would have liked 15 percent, but at least, we got a smidgen more and kind of got those folks through that troubled time.

And I think that illustrates the problem we had with many of Jerry's appointees. They were very capable in their field but totally insensitive to the real world around them. I guess the word was out that we were going to meditate and bring things to a halt. It was popular to run against the legislature and beat us over the head. We were the evil guys. So you did the best you could under the circumstances. Once in a while you found somebody that was compassionate, knowledgeable, and really felt a responsibility to work problems out. That's where we were all the time with that. Oh, what a

band of gypsies. [Laughter] What the hell, we had the Director of Health [and Welfare], he was this little, short guy that had the small man syndrome. Doctor Somebody [Mario Obledo]. He was all button-down, three-piece-suit, and then just for shock effect, he'd come to a meeting and take his jacket off, and he had his vest just emblazoned with vulgar buttons. Just mind boggling. And he was Director of Health and Welfare, for God's sake. It never quit. They had the guru [Lorenzo Jacques Barzaghi] wandering around bare-chest, barefoot, clicking his worry beads, and counseling the gov. People riding in and out of the office on their bicycles. You could smell pot all over hell. Wow, what an experience! [Laughter]

SENEY: Jerry Brown is a very interesting political figure.

CHAPPIE: Oh, yeah.

SENEY: A great contrast from his father.

CHAPPIE: Right.

SENEY: Let me go forward for a minute because he is active again in politics in California as chairman of California Democratic party.<sup>1</sup> Do

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<sup>1</sup>1989-1991.



you see any future for him in terms of elective office?

CHAPPIE: At this point--who am I to be the seer--I think it would be a real struggle for him. He left some footprints around here that will be a long time before they are erased. Better still--I guess I could call it the ridicule factor--"Moonbeam" and that type thing. The fact that three of his Supreme Court appointees--first time in the history of the state--were recalled or thrown out.<sup>1</sup>

SENEY: As long as we are on that, let me ask you about that. While the ostensible issue was the death penalty, there's a good deal of opinion both from the Republican side, and the Democratic side, too, that the real issue behind that was the 1982 reapportionment decision in which the supreme court essentially ruled against the Republican . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . That's right . . .

SENEY: . . . Party. At that point, as I understand it, the Republican party, the people who make it up, decided there had to be a change in the supreme

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<sup>1</sup>Rose Elizabeth Bird, Cruz Reynoso, and Joseph Grodin, failed to win confirmation in November 1986.

court. Were you aware of that decision? Did you take part in that decision?

CHAPPIE: No, I had nothing to do with that. I was back east at that point [in congress]. You know I didn't really hold with the Prop. 13 babies. Geez, they were the worst thing in my judgment that happened to us. Some of them are still around, you know, the Neanderthal attitude.

SENEY: These were the conservative Republicans elected in the 1978 election.

CHAPPIE: Yeah, the Prop. 13 kids, and some of them are still around. Some of them have worked their way into various appointed levels of government. They were real bomb throwers. They created real problems for us.

SENEY: Let me go back to the Rose Bird thing. Because I would like to ask your opinion as a knowledgeable Republican and someone interested in party affairs, as I know you are; would I be wrong in saying that the death penalty was really kind of a stalking horse issue, and that the real legitimacy of the campaign came from the activities of Governor Deukmejian and other Republicans who would not have been active in that campaign if had not been for the reapportionment decision?

CHAPPIE: I think that's a fair statement. And, of course, they picked a very timely issue--the death penalty. The people had had it right up to the kazoo, and they are angered. They repeatedly voted, and she kept beating them over the head and let fifty-four people go in her time, just reversed the penalty. It was just a whole combination of things. But underlying it, there was no doubt that the reapportionment thing was really what sparked it. We are going to see what happens to us this time. [Laughter]

SENEY: What do you mean?

CHAPPIE: Well, in terms of reapportionment, you know. That's on the horizon again. That will be interesting.

SENEY: If I could, I'd like to go back again to the Jerry Brown administration. The last time we talked you mentioned that you thought that history would be pretty good to Pat Brown, his father. That overall he had a very positive governorship. What would you prognosticate might be the view on Jerry Brown's governorship?

CHAPPIE: Well, he's still young so who can tell, but I don't think the historians are going to treat him nearly as well as old Pat. Say what you will, Pat was a good governor. He sold the statewide

water project.<sup>1</sup> He did some things in terms of highways. He knew how to work with the legislature. Granted he had a majority, but by the same token, he had some of the conservative Democrats like Hugh Burns and those folks. So he was a politician, a very practical politician. He accomplished some good things. You can't take that away from him. Hell, he's eighty-five, and now he's kind of the elder statesman--old affable Pat. I'm hard pressed to say anything bad about him. We used to needle him. He and the Golden Bear . . .

SENEY: . . . His airplane? . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Yeah, yeah. The Golden Bear. He and I were in the early stages of that tragedy called regional government at Tahoe. We worked on that together. By God, he would listen to you. So I've got good vibes with him. But, geez, that kid of his. [Laughter] As I stated one time when we had a big fund raiser, and someone said, "What do you think about Jerry Brown?" And I said, "If I had a kid like that, I would have pinched his little head when he was born," and that caught some commentary in the media. [Laughter]

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<sup>1</sup>Proposition 1 (November 1960)

SENEY: Let me ask you about, and I want you to explain this to me as fully as you can and take as much time as you like, something that has been a controversy in this area for a long time and still is, is the matter of the Auburn Dam. I've read a great deal about the Auburn Dam. It comes, and it goes, and it's back again. Tell me as much as you'd like about the politics and any other aspect of the Auburn Dam.

CHAPPIE: Initially, we started the Auburn Dam Committee right after Folsom was completed, and I'd fought Folsom Dam. I really objected to that facility, but it was in place even during the war years [World War II]. But I did forestall some of the massive take that they had proposed, back ten or twelve miles from the lake, just wiped this little county out.

SENEY: Let me ask who built the Folsom Dam?

CHAPPIE: The Corps of Engineers, then they turned it over to the Bureau of Reclamation for administration. That was completed in 1950 and filled in '51.

So then a group of us from Auburn and the Cool area, El Dorado and Placer County, got together and said, "Well, you know, there's a hell of an opportunity for another one. We need it." And it was a coalition of Democrats and

CHAPPIE: Republicans. [Congressman Harold T.] Bizz Johnson was the congressman. [Bert William] Bill Cassidy and I kind of spearheaded the thing in that end of the counties. Bill was the newspaper publisher of the Auburn Journal. We started a program of bringing dignitaries out here; the commissioners of the Bureau of Reclamation--Hell, one of them, I think, was still in [President Dwight D. Eisenhower] Ike's administration. That's how far back it goes. We gathered up a little money, and we would periodically go to D. C. and lobby people. Finally, we got the thing authorized. I still have the pen that [President Lyndon B. Johnson] LBJ gave me when he signed the authorization in '65. So the thing has been in the works a day or two.

For what it's worth, my view is that the thing that ultimately led to its downfall was that [Congressman Harold T.] Bizz [Johnson], God rest him, I felt, wanted that to be his monument, put a great big bronze plaque on it.

It went to a controversial design. Initially, they had proposed an earth-filled. Well, they discovered they would have cut a swath thirty square miles and nine foot deep to get the material. [Laughter] Even those of us that had

CHAPPIE:    been branded as environmental killers couldn't hold with that. It would have just destroyed that area.

So then they went to the controversial egg shell type dam. During that period, obviously, the environmentalists and the preservationists and the conservationists got together and--you got to give them credit--they did their homework; they found a five hundred million year fault and raised the [earthquake] issue and rang the bells, and you can't unring a bell. [There was a] great debate and controversy, Bizz was getting old and kind of lost his head of steam. And there was a change of attitude developing, an anti-West [attitude] in the congress. You spent these massive amounts of money on the CVP [Central Valley Project]. You are subsidizing water for these greedy farmers. Everything kind of fell into place for the anti-Auburn Dam folks.

During that period, however, they had let the Corps construction project spend more than three hundred plus million dollars. They poured concrete night and day down there for five years. I mean it was incredible. They built the coffer dam, the diversion works, the whole bit. Then it started coming unglued. Ultimately, they ran out

CHAPPIE: of money and steam, if you will. Then they redesigned the dam, came back with a dam that is seismically [seismologically] safe.

But Bizz was no longer chairman of the House Committee on Public Works. Money was drying up. Priorities had changed, and the thing kind of took a nose dive.

Then the two counties, Placer and El Dorado, formed the American River Authority and were back on the climb again. There is a strong demand, need for water in the Valley. San Joaquin County recently came to one of our meetings and said, "We got a check for one hundred million. This is the amount of water we need." Santa Clara County is looking. The Mountain Water District is looking.

But now we have another sinister aspect to it. [Congressman Vic] Fazio and [Congressman Robert] Matsui got \$300,000 in an appropriations bill to study it for a National Recreation Area [NRA]. Well, I don't give a damn what anyone says, the NRA concept has locked up about 600 rivers in the nation. And if they succeed in this case, they will not only, in my view for what it's worth, preclude construction on Auburn, but they are really going to hurt us on the South



Fork of the American. That's where my real concern is, at this point.

The rafting community and their friends brought about the demise of the SOFAR [South Fork of the American River] project which was perhaps not the best plan in the world, but it was an opportunity for El Dorado County to provide for its future water needs.

So we are kind of holding our breath right now in terms of the NRA and what's going to happen to us on the American River watershed.

[End Tape 7, Side A]

[Begin Tape 7 Side B]

CHAPPIE: Santa Clara County is indicating interest and so are a number of other entities. So the American River Authority is a combination of Placer and El Dorado Counties. We're the leading component, and we are violently opposed to the dry dam concept. We're willing to accept a stage structure.

SENEY: What does a dry dam mean?

CHAPPIE: Well, they just want to build a big mud hole down there so if we get another '86er or a '51er or a '27er [large flood years], they got a bucket to put it in, and then they'll let it out. And then we'll be stuck with a real ugly mess down there.

SENEY: So this would just be sort of a storm . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Catch basin, that's all. Mud hole. So then I guess in that instance we'll have to use the environmentalist tactics against them, "How dare you despoil the environment."

SENEY: [Laughter] Well, it's a controversy that goes on and will.

CHAPPIE: Oh, it never quits. By the same token the problem isn't going to go away. And now they are holding Folsom at half of its capacity. Well, is that good business? They are losing power revenue. They're wasting water resources to allow more capacity for potential floods.

SENEY: Along these lines, I wanted to ask you. We've touched on the business with the State Department of Fish and Game. What was the general effect of the 1975-77 drought on your district? Were there other things that you had to deal with?

CHAPPIE: Not really. We hadn't had a drought like that since '37. People are prone to forget. I have to point out that we are still suffering from some of the effects of that '75-'77 period. In the forests, for example, let alone water tables. Oh, I got into a battle with Jerry Brown over his putting a pipe across the Richmond Bridge without an EIR [Environmental Impact Report]. I accused

him of disturbing some spider habitat on the bridge. He didn't like that much.

That was the period when Marin County had voted against expanding its water potential. And then the moment the drought hit why Jerry, just by executive order, said, "Yeah, build the pipe down there and give them Northern California water." And then I come out of the woodwork and took a couple of shots at him. He was a great target. I mean . . .

SENEY: . . . You called him Saint Jerome.

CHAPPIE: Yeah, Saint Jerome. Then I got into it with him up in North San Juan. He flew Linda around . . .

SENEY: . . . Linda Ronstadt.

CHAPPIE: Yeah. He would fly her around. Oh, it really ticked him. The poet laureate, Gary Somebody-- Snyder. Whew! I mean he had a little propeller on top of his hat. When we started the . . . Am I getting off of the subject?

SENEY: No, you're doing fine.

CHAPPIE: We're starting the [California] Arts Council. God love Alan Sieroty. Jerry appoints, I mean, some real characters. So the first meeting they had when they constituted the Council, they spent half a day debating who was the poorest of the poor. And they were down there barefoot with toe

CHAPPIE: jams between their toes, shirtless, stunk to high heaven, and then Snyder appears on the scene. Well, he had driven up to North San Juan, jacked up his car, sold the tires and the wheels, living under a rock as I used to say.

And then the under-sheriff was a nice paesan, and he called one day and in Italian said, "Hey, Gino, the governor is using the Highway Patrol to ferry the poet back and forth to meetings which is kind of a'gin the law."

So I said, "OK." So sidled up to the Highway Patrol captain, and he says, "You, son of a bitch, if you ever said I said it, I'll kill you." And I said, "Don't worry." So I just blew it on Jerry. I did it with the media. I figured, "By God, if it had been me, I'd been in jail." He had to pony up \$800 and some dollars to reimburse the Highway Patrol. Slow learner.

They got a sewage problem in North San Juan. Hell, I could drive by and smell it. I didn't have to overfly it to see it. It's there. You can see the green grass growing in the septic tanks and in the leach fields. [Laughter]

So one day he takes the helicopter with Linda, and they go up and look at North San Juan--they wanted to see where the pot was growing in

the Ananda Colony--and this was about the time when he bought 160 acres up there. I had offers of people to overfly it and seed marijuana on it. I mean that was the emotional bit up there. Well, I caught him with the National Guard chopper. I had pipes because I served on the GA [Governmental Affairs] Committee. So I blew the whistle on him again, and it cost him a thousand bucks. He was infuriated. He would avert his eyes when I would see him in the halls. I used to terrorize him. [Laughter]

SENEY: [Laughter]

CHAPPIE: Great guy, Saint Jerome. I loved him. And my people ate it up, you know. There were a lot of red necks in the district. They ate it up.

SENEY: Would other governors do the same kind of thing, and maybe you would take less interest in that?

CHAPPIE: No. I tell you even around here [El Dorado County], by God, if you got a set of rules, and I got to live with them, then goddammit, everybody should or vice versa. If they do, I've got to. I think that was part of my upbringing. The old man would say, "By God, we got a set of rules around here, and we're all going to live by them. Nobody gets off the reservation." And I don't see anything wrong that. It was like with Reagan

with that damn welfare thing, he was wrong and, you hit him.

SENEY: Let me ask you about the Republican caucus.

CHAPPIE: Hot dog! [Laughter]

SENEY: I want to talk about it from the time you went into the legislature until the time you left. When you came in the party was in the minority and Mr. Monagan was elected caucus chair--rather minority leader--and then speaker and then left to join the Nixon administration . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Right . . .

SENEY: Who succeeded him as party leader?

CHAPPIE: Monagan and Veneman left. And Mulford was milling around. Geez, the one that comes to mind was [Assemblyman Robert G.] Bob Beverly.

SENEY: Let me ask you about your own role in the Republican caucus, because you become caucus chairman.

CHAPPIE: Yeah, I was a shit disturber.

SENEY: When were you elected caucus chairman?

CHAPPIE: When [Assemblyman Paul] Priolo took over. That was . . .

SENEY: . . . That was '76.

CHAPPIE: Yeah, yeah. '76.

SENEY: Paul Priolo was the minority leader.

CHAPPIE: He won by one vote. I didn't want it. We always had the two factions in the caucus; the good guys and the bad guys, the conservatives and the moderates.

SENEY: By this time the caucus was small. You had twenty-three members.

CHAPPIE: Twenty-three. Man, we were devastated. That was because of the Reagan reappo [reapportionment]. That was my one angry moment with Ronald Reagan.

SENEY: Mr. Priolo tried a very interesting experiment.<sup>1</sup> In February of 1977, you all voted, I take it, with his urging, to open the caucus meetings to the press. By August of 1977 you were having some second thoughts. Assemblyman [Gordon W.] Duffy publicly suggested that maybe it was time to . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Old Gordo and his prayer meetings . . .

SENEY: . . . close them again which seemed to agree with you. You thought that as long you were talking candidates and strategy that maybe that was a personal matter . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . That's right . . .

SENEY: . . . And policy discussions could be open. Tell me about all that.

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<sup>1</sup>The Sacramento Bee, August 19, 1977, p. A-15. Eugene A. Chappie papers, California State Archives, Sacramento, California.

CHAPPIE: Priolo took a pretty good shot, for lack of a better description, in that we focused attention on the Republican caucus, we were open, we got some press which we sorely needed. We were in absolute shambles. You couldn't get them to agree on what time of day it was in that damn caucus.

I tried some interesting things too that obviously you couldn't put in the press. Priolo was open, and he just looked at me and said, "Gino, you have an ability to get along with people, and I don't."

Priolo, he was a goddamn Sicilian, and he had this propensity of getting emotional about things. And many times the staff would call me, and he'd be into some controversy, and I'd just have to say, "Paul, you're going to lose me, baby, back off."

At 5:00 o'clock in the evening I open the bar in my office. And I invited both sides in to develop a little rapport between the conservatives and the moderates, to quietly discuss the issues, to see if we couldn't form some consensus. I'd even invite the Democrats in. And all at once it kind of took hold. You come into my office in the evenings and find a



half a dozen Democrats, four or five Republicans sitting down shooting the bull, kind of setting all that partisan BS aside. I think we kind of shaped the caucus up again. We buried some of our own personal animosities, then went and picked up some more seats; we were up to twenty-eight and we broke the two-thirds thing before I left. I think we were up to twenty-eight or twenty-nine.

SENEY: Give me a sense of the controversy between the factions in the Republican caucus, what were some of the issues and individuals who would . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . At the time, they are all monumental. Twenty minutes later you wonder what the hell was that all about. A lot of it was pecking order, committee assignments, just real, real fixed views on issues. God love old [Assemblyman Charles J.] Charlie Conrad, one of the greatest parliamentarians, soft-hearted guy, but, geez, when it came to being conservative--whoop!--Attila the Hun.

[Assemblyman] Frank Lanterman, he was the guy that voted against me for minority leader which I thanked him for later. [Assemblyman E. Richard] Captain Barnes, was one of the group of them that [when] you'd have a strategy set, and all at once

they'd come unraveled on you. You just couldn't predict those suckers. The rest of us were trying to get into present day society and politics to deal with the majority, to get what we could out of an issue, to be able to negotiate. And these guys--"Why sit down with those sons a bitches." Forget it, friend. Long time turning them around. Then ultimately a lot of them left. John L. E. [Bud] Collier, holy smoke! Some days you wanted to assassinate the bastard. He was the guy we had to go get off the golf course to give us the forty-first vote for Monagan. That kind of mentality. They didn't realize that the world was changing. Man, it was just all eroding around their feet. [Assemblyman Robert E.] Badham, you could deal with. He was right-wing, but he was practical. He'd hold his nose or get lost, but the others you just could not deal with. It was just warfare constantly. You just couldn't keep them from straying off the damn reservation. [Laughter] It was exciting. It worked out pretty well. Then we got a number of women in the caucus and sent some of them up the wall.

SENEY: Would you be bound by the caucus vote, to vote the way the caucus decided on an issue?

CHAPPIE: You always took a vote to determine whether you had a caucus position or not. You can read those cats. A lot of times we'd say, "OK, we don't have consensus. Go out there and do what you're going to do. Fuck it up a little more."

SENEY: There would only be a small percentage of legislation on which you would take a caucus position?.

CHAPPIE: Oh, yes. The budget, the major spending bills and some ideological things--partisan, pure partisan. But the rest of it, hell, I was all over the place, and you had to be, and you still have to be, I think.

SENEY: Let me ask you about one issue that you supported in 1977, and that was one of first of sort of the modern state abortion bills--anti-abortion bills. This was a bill in 1977, a very familiar bill now, to cut off MediCal payments for abortion<sup>1</sup> except in cases where the mother's life is threatened or . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . The three issues . . .

SENEY: . . . Right, and you sponsored that. Was this something that the caucus agreed on, did you get a caucus position on this one?

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<sup>1</sup>A.B. 2063, 1977-1978 Reg. Sess. (1977)

CHAPPIE: Yes. It's interesting how a guy gets cranked around on things. That was one of the things that compelled me to oppose the lottery and any gaming scheme in the county--the social costs.

Nevada had a totally negative approach to abortions. There were no welfare abortions in Nevada. We were getting three or four hundred a month at Lake Tahoe in my district. We had a larger sheriff's force in Tahoe valley than we did in the remainder of the county. Nevada had the casinos; we had the housing. So we had all the social ills and the costs thereof. Monumental. People would go up there and gamble away their life savings; they'd kill; they'd rob; they'd abandon their kids, their dogs, their cats. The cost to this little county was just astronomical. To this day I've yet to buy my first lottery ticket, and I like to gamble, but, goddamnit, the cost of that lottery. I've watched them in D.C. Who lines up? The poor folk. They deny their kids. They waste the damn money. And it's coming out of my pocket in terms of welfare, food stamps. It's a tough row. I think that's what provoked me to do that among other things. And maybe that's the wrong approach because you are coming down on this

innocent youngster perhaps who got in the situation that maybe she couldn't handle or was uneducated. So you say you are going to spawn another little illegitimate that we'll feed for the rest of our lives on the welfare rolls. I used to have some real emotional problems with that.

SENEY: Abortion is a very emotional issue. There is almost no middle ground or opinion about abortion. How would you put yourself in the abortion debate?

CHAPPIE: You know I'm Catholic, but I've kind of come around. And of late--and you've got to be devious to survive--there's been a marked trend toward sterilization, voluntary. So if I get into a little bang-bang, I say now wait a minute, now wait a minute, how would it be if we were to deny a woman the opportunity to have herself sterilized. And that kind of starts a different conversation. Nobody tells me I can't do anything with my body. Obviously, I can't become pregnant. So I'm saying, by God, perhaps that should be a woman's option.

SENEY: You're running for re-election to the board of supervisors. Is this going to be an issue in your campaign?

CHAPPIE: So far it has not surfaced. And I don't think it will, I don't think it will. I have a sense both of the other guys are anti-abortion. I'm not sure. But no, it hasn't surfaced.

I went and talked to an eighth grade class in Georgetown school the other day. By God, that issue surfaces. It's amazing, reflective of what happens at the dinner table at home.

SENEY: Let me ask you one other thing about abortion because I think it is an interesting issue from a political point of view. The turns in the recent opinions on abortion and the effect of one's position, holding political office . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Oh, boy . . .

SENEY: . . . have changed completely, given the Webster<sup>1</sup> decision. Now it's up to the states to make some of the decision. Let me try to characterize what's happened. People were able, some people suggest, to get a free ride especially on the Republican side, to say we are opposed to abortion. Voters could ignore the issue because the rights had been set out by the courts. Now the rights are perhaps in jeopardy,

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<sup>1</sup>Webster v. Reproductive Health Services 492 U.S. 490 (1989).

and Republican and anti-choice candidates are suffering.

CHAPPIE: They are.

SENEY: Did you expect that turn of events, political turn of events?

CHAPPIE: I had a suspicion it was going to end up this way because even the supreme court is susceptible to pressure. I got a sneaking hunch they finally said, "Hell with it, kick it back down there, and let those cats hassle it." Perhaps a poor comparison, but in the old days the legislature set the county supervisor's and all the county constitutional officer's salaries, and all the county constitutional officer's, the elective's salaries in Sacramento. So I had to go down there every year and put in bills to raise the auditor's salary, the sheriff's. There would be hoots, whistles and cat-calls because they're all making more than we were at \$500 a month. I was one of the strong proponents in "Enough of this crap, by God, let it go back home where it belongs."

SENEY: Take the heat off you.

CHAPPIE: Certainly! And it came to pass.

SENEY: [Laughter] Let me ask you another thing. By 1977, you were fifth in seniority in the

assembly. Now I don't know how high you got because I haven't been able to compute it by the time you left . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . I was second or third . . .

SENEY: Did seniority help you much in the assembly? Was that a factor at all?

CHAPPIE: No, hell, no . . .

SENEY: Let me [say] that there was one mention of the article, the news article that I read.<sup>1</sup> It had to do with Mr. Robie, Ronald Robie who was head of the Water Department, . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Ron Robie . . .

SENEY: . . . Robie, right. In that you had been instrumental in getting him that job, and you said, "Being around a long time helps you do this and gives you a little more access to these people."

CHAPPIE: Yes.

SENEY: There was that factor with the executive branch, perhaps, but not within the legislature?

CHAPPIE: To a minor degree. Because of the fact that you had been there for a long, long time, you would have freshman or new legislators, call them what you will, come by and say, "Gino, I got a problem

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<sup>1</sup>Eugene A. Chappie Papers.



in my district." By this time I had gained some committee assignments where I had Parks and Recs  
CHAPPIE: [Recreation] statewide, and Ways and Means.  
"How do I help my district?"

There were a lot of guys like [Assemblyman Larry] Chimbole. I told him, "Larry, you are jacking around up here. You are going to lose the goddamn election. I like you. You are a Democrat; that's your problem, but you are not taking care of your constituents. You got a little problem down here in the state park, can I help you?" I'd do a lot of that.

My attitude was, if the money was available, and you had a viable project, and the legislator was dead on his ass, then I felt I had to go to him and say, "Here's an opportunity. Your people would enjoy this service--not necessarily that they demand or need it--but it's here. And these funds are committed to be spent in this particular area. Let me help you." So I guess you develop a kind of a network of friends that could come to you for counsel. You establish mutual respect. I know a lot of times--there's no secrets down there--a lot of times word would trickle out of the Democrat caucus say, "We got to take that goddamn Chappie on." They'd say,

"No, leave him alone. He's good. We've got a given, and we may get some crazy." So it paid off in many, many ways. But I never looked at it in terms of seniority. Hell, no.

SENEY: You had with the legislation you sponsored, according one of your press releases,<sup>1</sup> an 86 percent success rate. Would you attribute it partly to this kind of getting along with others?

CHAPPIE: With some of those bills, I'd get up on the floor and mumble because they knew I would never jerk them around, I'd never embarrass them. If a guy'd come over to me and say, "Gino, I got a little question," I'd just have the bill set over. You never bulldozed. There may be two or three times where you really had to stiffen, because you had a burning issue, and it may have generated some partisan aspects, but 99 percent of the time, I'd say, "OK. No problem, I'll set it over." Then we would sit down and talk about it.

I used to have some tough bills that people, [because of the] nature of the beast, wouldn't understand. And I'd be looking up at the board, and I'd need forty-one votes, and I would have twenty-five. I'd put the bill on call, and guys

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<sup>1</sup>Eugene A. Chappie Papers.

would start coming by and say, "Do you really need the bill?"

And I'd say, "Yes, it's my life, you know. But do what you got to do. I don't want to embarrass you. I don't want to cause you any problems at home."

Then I would lift the call and would pick up eight or ten more votes. Then every once in a while, a screaming lib--[Assemblyman] Art Torres, Arturo Torres--would say, "We'll give the man from Cool the forty-first vote." Mutual respect.

SENEY: You mentioned that there was from time to time talk in the Democratic caucus of opposing you, but it never really came to much.

CHAPPIE: Never really did.

SENEY: Your district had a majority Democratic registration in it. It had 56 percent.

CHAPPIE: Sometimes sixty. In the early days it was sixty-one.

SENEY: . . . In the late seventies it was down to 56/57 percent . . .

CHAPPIE: Yeah, yeah.

SENEY: Let's talk about some of those elections because you never really had. . . . We talked a little last time. You had one scare.

CHAPPIE: Barron Reed.<sup>1</sup>

SENEY: And then a man named George Shaw ran against you in 1976.

CHAPPIE: Shaw. He was the one I couldn't remember last time.

SENEY: Yes, you beat him by about 12,000 votes.

CHAPPIE: We were worried about him though.

SENEY: Well, it was not a shoo-in for you. You got 61,267 votes. He got 50,115. So that's hardly a rout on his part. That was the 1976 election.

CHAPPIE: We had to hit him on the marijuana thing. That's what turned that one because he had really . . .

SENEY: . . . This was the man with the marijuana belt buckle that we discussed last time.

CHAPPIE: Yes. He had rallied the teacher corps, and God love those folks, every election they'd spend \$20,000, \$30,000, \$40,000 against me, and I had better than an 85 percent pro-student record. I voted for--what was it?--S.B. 160,<sup>2</sup> the Rodda bill, binding arbitration, and the damn teaching community come out after my hide every trip because I used to disagree with them on issues.

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<sup>1</sup>Chappie defeated Reed by a margin of only 750 votes in 1974. The Morning Herald, January 20, 1978, 2A. [This newspaper is not otherwise identified] Contained in the Eugene A. Chappie Papers.

<sup>2</sup>Rodda Act of 1975. Ch. 961, Statutes of 1975.

I just wouldn't lie down and play dead, but I had a damn good voting record for kids.

SENEY: In 1978 you ran against Jim Ferris who was a Yuba County supervisor. And that was not nearly so serious . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . No, no . . .

SENEY: . . . as the one before.

CHAPPIE: He was kind of a nothing.

SENEY: Yes. Last time we talked about fund raising. Since we've talked, I looked up some of the sources of campaign funds that you had in the '76 and '78 election. By '76, '78 there was PAC money--Political Action Committee money--and the largest contributions to your campaign were PAC funds.<sup>1</sup> There was the Automotive Education Fund. I think they gave you \$500. There was the State Employees PAC, \$1,000 for that. There was California Medical Association PAC that was, if I'm not mistaken, another \$1,000. But the bulk of it then came from individuals.

CHAPPIE: We played on that. We really worked that saying, "We don't sell out to the vested interests. 80 or some plus percent of our money comes from small donations."

SENEY: There was a bankers PAC for about \$1,000.

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<sup>1</sup>Eugene A. Chappie Papers.

CHAPPIE: Yeah, that was Wells Fargo. They led the charge. CSEA [California State Employees Association], for example, that was kind of unusual for them to put that kind of bread into a Republican campaign. I carried a lot of legislation for the state employees. I carried the Highway Patrol's retirement bill<sup>1</sup> which is still pretty heavy.

SENEY: That's a very cushy retirement. I envy them.

CHAPPIE: Me, too. [Laughter] All I got's a funny license plate. [Laughter] Thirteen/thirteen. That was the bill number. I never forgot that.

SENEY: There was in this campaign with Ferris a charge that you had mailed, after your filing date, a four page analysis of the ballot propositions including Proposition 13. He brought charges against you with the Fair Political Practices Commission.<sup>2</sup> You were later cleared of any wrongdoing in that regard.

CHAPPIE: Hell, I'd forgotten all about that. So I had to be innocent. [Laughter]

SENEY: [Laughter] Well, it was a four page analysis of Prop. 13 plus twelve other ballot measures . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . I seem to remember that. You know, comme si, comme sa.

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<sup>1</sup>A.B. 13, 1967-1968 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 149 (1968).

<sup>2</sup>Eugene A. Chappie Papers.

SENEY: He felt that this was a use of taxpayer's money .

. . .

CHAPPIE: . . . He wasn't that smart. It was the Democratic caucus that did it.

SENEY: Well, clearly it was a campaign issue.

CHAPPIE: Oh, yeah.

SENEY: He had even gotten signatures so he was a write-in candidate on the Republican side.

CHAPPIE: I did that once too. You had to play the game that's all.

SENEY: There was another issue I wanted to ask you about because it seemed to me to be a kind of interesting one. That was, you voted in favor of the Constitutional Amendment 4 [A.C.A. 4]--to put it on the ballot--which was the shield law for reporters.<sup>1</sup>

CHAPPIE: Oh, yeah, Bill Bagley. Bill Bagley got into the Brown Act too and modified that with his open meetings.<sup>2</sup> Yeah, he was very persuasive.

SENEY: I would think of that as a pretty liberal kind of vote.

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<sup>1</sup>Proposition 4 (June, 1980)

<sup>2</sup>West's California Annotated Codes, Government Codes. See 54950 et. seq.

CHAPPIE: Yeah, it was. Very liberal, like my vote for the goddamn [California] Coastal Commission.<sup>1</sup>

[Laughter]

SENEY: Let me say at the very same time that you voted in favor of Constitutional Amendment 4, you also voted against requiring public utilities to establish Life Line rates<sup>2</sup>.

CHAPPIE: The cost, the cost, the cost. That bill was badly, badly structured. I think John Miller was the author. You never knew where the hell he was going. . . . He was a black gentleman; he became a superior court judge.

[End Tape 7, Side B]

[Begin Tape 8, Side A]

SENEY: I want to ask you about another matter. In 1978 you were a strong supporter of Ken Maddy for governor. I know from our previous discussion you didn't have much to do with Mr. Reagan's campaigns for governor, as I recall.

CHAPPIE: I was kind of busy in this county. I got him to fly in, we had a parade, but other than that it was not heavy.

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<sup>1</sup>Proposition 20 (November 1972).

<sup>2</sup>Eugene A. Chappie Papers.



SENEY: What about in the 1974 campaign? Houston Flournoy's campaign for governor. Did you play any role in the primary or the general?

CHAPPIE: I was heavily involved, and say to this day-- because I was part of the northern California team--if we'd had him three or four more days in the Central Valley and northern California, he'd won. That's where he lost the election.

They would not recognize the fact that northern California had grown, and that we were building the party, that we had picked up some counties in the Republican ranks, and we then lost it.

Yeah, I liked Hugh. He's crazy.

SENEY: You spent a lot of time with Mr. Maddy. You were an early supporter.

CHAPPIE: I flew all over the district with him. I like Ken. He's just a good person. Likes to play games in the political arena; he's very clever at it. He doesn't MauMau. I think he's kind of proven his mettle over the years in that he is scandal-free; he's been a team player.

SENEY: Even the fact that he has publicly admitted that he has smoked marijuana has not kept him from currently being the minority leader of the state senate.

CHAPPIE: Right. He's very resilient.

SENEY: I assume that part of his attractiveness to you was his farm background and rural background? He's from the Central Valley. He's married to a very prominent agricultural family; Foster Farms.

CHAPPIE: Well, his first wife wasn't, but she was still country. He just knows how to get along with people. If he gives you his word, you can go to the bank [with it].

SENEY: Now, he lost that primary to [Attorney-General] Evelle Younger who was from Los Angeles.

CHAPPIE: . . . Who was a terrible candidate. The general. He never forgot that star on his shoulder. We had a terrible time with him as a candidate. Tried hard, but, well, they got him for quadruple dipping.

SENEY: Retirement?

CHAPPIE: Yes. He wasn't the best of candidates.

SENEY: What about the United States Senate? Did you play any part in the U.S. senate elections?

CHAPPIE: I worked for Pete Wilson.

SENEY: That would have been in 1982.

CHAPPIE: Right. Northern California.

SENEY: Did you work prior to that? For Mr. [Senator S.I.] Hayakawa?

CHAPPIE: Oh, yeah. Obviously. We worked for Sam.  
[Laughter] I worked for old Bang-Bang. But,  
geez, he had a hard time getting out of the gate.  
[Laughter] Enough said.

You know there was a period of time, perhaps  
even now, when I had eight or ten legislators  
CHAPPIE: living in my assembly district. And they caused  
me more damn grief. [Senator H.L.] Richardson  
used to like to go skiing. He lived in Loomis.  
Well, he liked to go up Highway 50. OK. One day  
I come down to the floor and pick up the file,  
and here's a resolution offered by Senator  
Richardson to appropriate \$50,000 to study the  
tunnel from Twin Bridges to Tahoe<sup>1</sup>. I'm having  
enough trouble around here without that kind of  
help. So he had it on file. It had just come  
over from the other side. I never knew anything  
about it; [he] never gave me the courtesy of  
saying, "Hey, this is what I'm doing in your  
district."

So he come over and said, "Are you going to  
take the bill off file?"

And I said, "What bill?"

And he said, "Well, my . . ."

"Oh, that's your bill, huh, Bill?"

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<sup>1</sup>Unable to verify.

CHAPPIE: "Yeah, I'm really anxious to get it going."

I said, "What are you going to do with the \$50,000?"

"Well, we're going to study that thing," he said, "We'll help you."

And I said, "OK." So I just kept holding it on file, holding it on file. I got the word around. Nobody else carried it.

So I said to old Carl, my AA, "Carl, dig around and find out the most controversial issue in terms of highways in Richardson's district. He's got to have one." We found a dandy.

So I put in a little bill to help Mr. Richardson.<sup>1</sup> I put one hundred thou[sand] in.

And he come over to the floor one day, "Well, goddamn you, Gino."

And I said, "Why, Senator, what's your problem?"

He said, "Ya, ya, ya."

I said, "Mutual aid society. I wanted to help you a little bit. Now shall we pull the bills."

He stomped off the floor, and that was the end of it. You couldn't believe what they would do to help you.

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<sup>1</sup>Unable to verify.

SENEY: One other thing I want to ask you about. In 1978 there was a rural caucus formed.

CHAPPIE: I helped start it, yes.

SENEY: There were eighteen members, Democrats and Republicans. There were allegations for years that rural people have dominated the legislature, and, of course, reapportionment had taken care of that, and now you're down to forming a caucus to try to press your interests, did you find that you were fairly successful?

CHAPPIE: Geez, I look at it down there now. My God, when we started, you dug around and ate the costs out of your own legislative budget. Now they've got staff. They're a strong voice. So I guess it came to pass.

[Gordon] Duffy and I did that over a couple of drinks one day, and I think John Thurman.

SENEY: Was there a specific issue?

CHAPPIE: To raise some awareness. We had the Women in Agriculture. They surfaced during that period. And we felt we were just losing the battle. They were just eroding us away little by little. By God, we had to do something to get some media, to get some recognition and to indicate to the folks back home, yeah, we care and we are doing what we

can to give you an equal shake. So it came out pretty well.

SENEY: Unless there's anything you would like to say about the period in the assembly, I would like to talk about your election to the United States House of Representatives.

CHAPPIE: Hot damn! [Laughter]

SENEY: You were mentioned over and over again as a possible opponent to Harold T. (Bizz) Johnson, the congressman from the area that you represented in the assembly. Now you are going to broaden out to fourteen counties. You went from eleven in the assembly to six plus a little. Now fourteen . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Piece of cake . . .

SENEY: . . . So you decide by 1980 that it's time to run. What made you decide?

CHAPPIE: I decided in '78. Jim Taylor from Nevada County, a retired Smokey the Bear, U.S. Forest Service, real nice guy but just a ponderous turtle, slow, plodding. He spent \$12,000 and got 41 percent of the vote.

SENEY: In 1978?

CHAPPIE: Right. So I got Carl and some friends and said, "Leave us conduct a little poll." We discovered that 60 percent didn't know who their congressman

was. For openers, we raised the issues, got some answers that were mind boggling.

SENEY: In this poll you mean?

CHAPPIE: In the poll. And decided in '78 that we would go. So we start separating our money, corporate versus personal.

SENEY: Now let me interject here. You got in a little trouble because you didn't separate it . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . early enough. Right. [Laughter] . . .

SENEY: . . . Early enough. There were a couple of contributions, one from Boswell<sup>1</sup> for \$1,000, one from Saylor for \$1,000. You transferred \$15,000 from your assembly to your congressional campaign . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Yeah, sloppy bookkeeping. I admitted it publicly. I goofed, made a mistake. What the hell do you do?

SENEY: Did that hurt you, do you think?

CHAPPIE: No. No. Just coming up front and saying, "I screwed up." What the hell, we're all human. Had I done it covertly it would have been different. But it was just an honest error.

SENEY: Let me add here that the problem was that it was legal for you to accept those corporate

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<sup>1</sup>I.G. Boswell and Saylor & Co. are two large California agri-business corporations.

contributions for the state assembly, but not for congress.

CHAPPIE: Right. Right. So we decided to go, and we were off and running two years prior to '80. We sampled periodically, and we knew we were catching him. It was sad. I delayed and delayed--kind of saying, "Bizz, I don't want to destroy a beautiful, illustrious career. We're good friends."

It saddened me when I declared, and Alba [Johnson] turned her back on me and would never speak to me again.

SENEY: Mrs. [Bizz] Johnson?

CHAPPIE: Yes, we were like kissing cousins. Bizz's mom was born on our ranch. We worked very closely all those years because he had all of my counties at one time or other. He kept getting reappo-ed as did I.

SENEY: Reapportioned?

CHAPPIE: Yeah, I could call him, or he'd call me.

SENEY: Well, you frequently appeared together at ribbon cuttings and ceremonies . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Oh, yeah. Yeah.

SENEY: I'm interested in the campaign. How much did you budget in that campaign? What did you figure that campaign was going to cost you?



CHAPPIE: Well, we figured a quarter of a million, and perhaps we overspent and overkilled, but, hey, you never look back. We knew that even though we were winning, we couldn't afford the luxury of letting down, peaking too fast, and we just kept hammering.

SENEY: Where did you get that money from? How did you raise those funds?

CHAPPIE: The majority of it again was from personal contributions. My last four or six years in the assembly, I had bought our own computer system, had a guy on full-time. All he did was hammer out letters, night and day. You know you send out a letter, it costs you a buck, and you get twenty-five, or fifty, or a hundred back, it's a way to raise funds. By dint of shopping and developing our own list, we were getting money from all over the country for the congressional race.

SENEY: It is often said that Governor Reagan, who was running successfully for president at this very same time in 1980, had notoriously short coat tails.

CHAPPIE: Yeah.

SENEY: Did you find that true or do you think he helped pull you into office?

CHAPPIE: I out-polled him. Granted I associated myself with him. We made lot of joint appearances in the district. Vern Sturgeon was his principal go-fer. We had a lot of joint appearances. I had him in the district showing that, here is the guy that's going to be the next president; we know him, and he'll help our district. And it paid off, it really paid off.

SENEY: But you got more votes than he did?

CHAPPIE: I did. Yeah, yeah.

SENEY: You're smiling when you say that. That pleases you.

CHAPPIE: Well, yeah. What the hell, it shows with dint of hard work, you can do it.

SENEY: Did you feel perhaps less beholden to him?

CHAPPIE: Oh, no. No, no. It wasn't that, it was just the fact, that maybe you can do it on your own, you don't need the coat-tail. I oft times said, "Well, he coat-tailed me." [Laughter]

SENEY: Did he help you in fund raising?

CHAPPIE: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

SENEY: He is notoriously known as a successful fund raiser.

CHAPPIE: Oh, great. Hell, we had a thousand people in the fairgrounds in Yuba City one night. No, just a great guy. He came any number of times, when you

consider the demands on him. Why he was great. Well, as I used to say, "I covered his ass for eight years in Sacramento." So you know.

[Laughter]

SENEY: What was it like arriving in Washington D. C. as a new member of the congress?

CHAPPIE: I was very fortunate in that the majority of the caucus, Republican caucus, California, were old classmates in Sacramento. Over the years, even as a county supe[rvisor] or in the legislature, I'd been back there repeatedly. I knew where some of the doors were. Then particularly with the Reagan administration going in, the doors were open. I was very, very fortunate. I settled in quickly. Excuse me . . .

[Interruption]

SENEY: . . . The doors were open.

CHAPPIE: I brought two people from California with me, and hired Bizz's number one gal for six months. I found that in his last term, he was in total disarray. He didn't know what the hell was going on. It was just incredible how that thing had fallen apart. They were using typewriters yet, not even the memory typewriter. The world had gone off and left them. But I used her as a

resource. Some of my conservative colleagues said, "You've sold out to the enemy."

My god, and I'd say, "Come off of that crap. I need the information. I got to know where the bodies are, where the Democrat bodies are." She was able to avail us of some of his material even, committee stuff, things of that nature which helped. So I was really lucky, really lucky.

SENEY: What were your committee assignments?

CHAPPIE: Well, I had Ag[riculture]. I had to have that. Small Business. Then as a freshman, you get two standing committees period. Then later I got. Excuse me . . .

[Interruption]

. . . Second term I picked up Merchant Marine and Fisheries. The speaker appointed me to the Select Committee on Drugs and Narcotic Abuse that was heavy. I had a couple of threats on my life. I think I had a total of six subcommittees.

SENEY: How did that happen?

CHAPPIE: Well, we were meeting and traveling around with people from all over the world, the Italians in with the French triangle, the French. We had the Colombians, most of the South American countries. We visited some of them. . . . I didn't take too

many of those junkets because [Congressman Charles] Charlie Wrangle, I felt, abused the system. So I just stayed away from that.

Then, of course, I had the kid in Marysville that attempted to hire a guy to kill me. That was totally unrelated. So I had the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] sleeping with me for three weeks. It scared the hell out of the wife. I thought it was funnier than hell, but she didn't. The kid went off and joined the Foreign Legion. We haven't heard from him since.

SENEY: What was his reason for wanting to kill you?

CHAPPIE: I don't know. His dad was a psycho, and, apparently, some of that trickled down to the kid. Busted family. He was a model student, in high school, the whole bit. He appeared in D. C. one day, and we had one moment for pause; he walked in and had kind of a strange look, sat down, flipped the briefcase open, and I said, "Oh, oh." Fortunately, he didn't have a gun. It flashed, "Hinkley."<sup>1</sup> He was babbling; he went over to the NRA [National Rifle Association], and said if they didn't give him \$30,000, he was going to provoke some violence. So then my AA,

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<sup>1</sup>John Hinkley attempted to assassinate President Ronald Reagan on March 30, 1981 in Washington, D.C.

who is my wife now, had the Secret Police sicced on him. Then the FBI got into it. They tracked him, and she personally took him out to the airport, counseled him all afternoon, got him on a plane, saying, "Let's get him the hell out of here with the FBI's help." And then the sapsucker resurfaced back home. He went up and offered this guy a couple of thousand bucks to waste me and the police chief in Chico [California]. Then they lost track of him, they apprehended him, put him in custody.

His dad is living in Virginia. This shows you how the system works; they wanted to parole him to his dad's custody in Virginia. And I'm saying, "Well, for Christ's sake, you're sending him back closer to me, you dummies." Finally, he snuck away and joined the French Foreign Legion. That was crazy.

SENEY: How would you compare the assembly and the congress? We've talked about lobbying before, but how in other ways, in terms of committee system, the way the two bodies function.

CHAPPIE: The state assembly is far more efficient, far more effective, better organized. I mean you can't believe the preening and posturing and dinking around in congress. Cloak and dagger.

Guys pulling the rug out from under you. Just incredible.

And a lot of it's staff. I had this chief staff consultant refuse to give me committee testimony. I had to go to the chair and say, "What the hell's coming down, for Chrissake, I'm a member of the committee. I'm not entitled to a replay of the testimony or transcript?" That's the kind of nonsense you get into back there.

Here if you got a bill you maintain some control; you decide when you are going to have it heard, what you want to do by way of amendments. You can refuse amendments; you can have the bill held in committee. Back there you introduce a bill, and it's the property of the sub-committee, and it's bye-bye, choo-choo.

SENEY: What else in terms of the differences between the two houses, the two bodies, rather, the state assembly and the federal congress? I guess an outsider's view would be that in the U.S. House of Representatives, you are dealing with the federal government, a much more powerful position being a member of the house of representatives than being a member of the California assembly, would you agree with that?

CHAPPIE: Hell, no. There's 435 of those prima donnas back there. Seven guys died in my first term, and I didn't know one of them. Here it was like family in the state assembly because you got to know everyone on a very personal basis, very personal basis. And you got to learn the forty senate guys.

In D.C. you'd wander over to the senate chambers, but who the hell do you know over there? I've had the sergeants turn me away from the door. [Laughter] So then you flip out your bug and say, "I are a congressman." Oh, then they salivate all over you. There's really an absolutely different atmosphere back there. It's a lot of posturing, dinking around. Seniority, good grief; your first term, you don't speak until spoken to. You're so far down the dais, nobody can find you. The pecking order is when you are recognized to speak; sometimes you wonder. The redeeming grace is that things move so slowly back there that the people are saved.

SENEY: Did you enjoy your service?

CHAPPIE: Oh, I had a ball, had a ball.

SENEY: Now you served three terms.

CHAPPIE: Right.

SENEY: Why did you decide to leave?



CHAPPIE: The flying back and forth every weekend, fifty-two, fifty-four times a year. Raising money got to be a real, real problem with me. Personal problems in terms of getting people continually . . .

SENEY: . . . How much did you figure you needed to have to run?

CHAPPIE: Anywhere up to a half a million.

SENEY: And the amount was going up with each election.

CHAPPIE: Certainly. The price of doing business. The cost of doing business. I never did buy TV time, radio and mail and all that garbage. I was hitting people that were going broke and bankrupt, and I just figure the hell with it. I wanted to quit before they hauled me out of there on a plank, while I still had my senses around me, some remaining time to do some fun things that I wanted to do. So I left with a real good taste in my mouth. It caused some consternation in the ranks when I indicated I was going to quit, but enough's enough.

[End of Tape 8, Side A]

[Begin Tape 9, Side A]

SENEY: Last time we ended by talking about the period in the congress and your decision to leave the congress. You said that caused a considerable

amount of consternation, I take it, with your Republican colleagues, because you could have won the seat again. They would have preferred that you stayed there.

CHAPPIE: Right. Particularly some of the younger guys. I was the oldest, newest kid on the block when I joined the caucus. Some of the younger guys, one

CHAPPIE: of them in particular, was in tears, when I announced that I was going to leave. Not that I am necessarily smart; in several instances this was the first brush with politics that these youngsters had had, and they were kind of at loose ends. So I would counsel them in terms of staff. One kid in three weeks he'd totally changed his staff, twice. That didn't ring very well back home. So I spent a lot of time talking to them about staff, and how they communicated back home, and some of the little tricks one learns over the years, and oft times would bring a little humor, buffoonery into the caucus. Geez, some of those guys get so damn serious they want to kill one another behind closed doors. So I kept reminding them, you got to remember that you have to know how to laugh at yourself and that some of these momentous, earth-shaking problems you won't remember the day after

tomorrow. You won't know what you were all cranked up about. I felt that I kind of brought back a little more cohesiveness to the caucus through good humor.

Yeah, I did upset quite a number of them. I actually was visited a number of times, saying, "Gino, you can't do it to us."

And I said, "Well, by God, you know enough is enough."

SENEY: I take it you didn't really enjoy your service in the house that much.

CHAPPIE: Why I had a ball, but the combination of things. One, you are so far away from people. I like people. Hell, I like to be out there. That's one of the reasons, I flew back every weekend, to be with the folks.

And things move so slowly. It took me three years to get the Feather River bill approved.<sup>1</sup> Three fraggin' years. Whereas in the legislature something like that would have taken six or eight months, been behind you, and you go on to another issue, another crusade, another cause.

And some of the partisan bullshit that goes on. You know I had one of my colleagues virtually threaten me when I said, "Yeah, I'm

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<sup>1</sup>16 USC sec. 1274 [1985].

going to go to the speaker's dinner. Good chance for me to relate with the California legislature, with [Speaker] Willie Brown [California State Assembly]--the speaker--Dave Roberti, the pres pro tem. But I learned one thing when you are always in the minority, you got to learn to deal with the majority and work with them if you want to get anything accomplished. And I felt very comfortable with that approach, and, in many instances, quite successful.

So you had to fight through all that morass of crap. And every once in a while you would find one of your own guys was beating you over the head when you weren't looking. I didn't have time for that nonsense.

But I had quite an experience. I mean entree to the White House, virtually on request, the executive office building. I used to have a lot of fun with staff at that level too.

SENEY: You dealt with Ed Meese, and we've talked about that, when he was a member of the governor's staff.

CHAPPIE: Yeah, yeah.

SENEY: Governor Reagan, now President Reagan and Meese<sup>1</sup> is with him again, of course, in a very high position. Did you deal with him in Washington too?

CHAPPIE: Always made time for me. He and Mike Deavor.<sup>2</sup> The doors were always open. I brought delegations, particularly the Wine Institute-- they had some serious problems. Given a week's notice, I could bring those folks in the Roosevelt Room down at the White House, no sweat. That really helped, when you are in the minority, and when you have a district that has some real difficult agricultural problems. God, it was great, it was great. In turn they opened the doors, so I had good vibes in that respect, was never shunted off, or told, "Call back next week." In most cases you got an up or down answer too. We can help you, or we can't but maybe here's an alternative.

SENEY: When Ed Meese was here in California, by all accounts I'm familiar with, he was highly respected and was considered to be quite a capable and amiable individual. When he goes to

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<sup>1</sup>Counselor to the President 1981-1985. Attorney-General of the United States 1985-1988.

<sup>2</sup>Deputy Chief of Staff 1981-1985.

Washington, his reputation changes, whatever may have happened, it changed. Did he change, or how do you account for this?

CHAPPIE: No. Ed, again, was a very trusting, warm-hearted guy, and some of his friends screwed him over. They didn't manipulate him; they screwed him over, damn them. It made me want to cry to see what some of your confidants, trusted friends, would do to you.

SENEY: Can you illustrate that for me? Tell me something.

CHAPPIE: Well, you know, the Web Tech thing, for example. A couple of congressmen went to the pen over that, so the press immediately come down on Meese, saying, "Well, you had some tie through a business entity. One of your former business associates, whatever, was involved in Web Tech, so now you got egg on your face." You know, incrimination by association. And Ed is a trusting soul, and I felt perhaps he delegated, in some instances, too much authority or perhaps did not devote the necessary time to reviewing what the hell was going on around him. They blindsided him. I can't say perhaps he wasn't at fault. Let's be fair in spreading the blame. I think he just let his skimmer leak on occasion;

it got out of hand. In Sac[ramento] he had his hand on everything.

By the same token, Bill Clark<sup>1</sup> was in a similar position and never had one iota of problem.

SENEY: He was highly respected.

CHAPPIE: Oh, yes. Clean as a hound's tooth, but, by God, he was tough. You knew damn well who the boss was around there. [Laughter]

SENEY: When it came to President Reagan, you indicated as governor he would listen, and you used welfare as the illustration. And it was your feeling, you said, that he knew a good deal about government and what was going on here in California. Did you have the feeling that that was the case when he was president?

CHAPPIE: Not really. I sat in on cabinet meetings and joint meetings with the quote, unquote leadership many, many times, and I think it was so big that maybe he just finally said, "What the hell, I'll delegate the authority, and let someone else sweat it." Combination perhaps of things, that he was getting up in years, you know. You've got to face those things. But once briefed, look

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<sup>1</sup>Mr. Clark served in a variety of positions in the Reagan White House including National Security Advisor 1982-1983.

out, boy, he had the facility to plant the facts in his head, and he could just spout them ad nauseam. He had an incredible ability, and I sat in on some of the briefings where they'd say, you know, "Mr. President, here's the issue. Here's where we are. Here's where they are. Here's the direction we think you should go." And many times, now I've never had personal knowledge of it, but word had it that they'd draft up some comments or a speech, he'd go through it and rearrange it to his own style, sometimes disagree with staff, saying, "No, by God, this is way I want to go."

But I think in all honesty that he did there in the end kind of lose it. It was sad to see. You know, what the hell went on with the [Oliver] Ollie North<sup>1</sup>-[John] Poindexter<sup>2</sup> thing. Who knows?

SENEY: Who will ever know?

CHAPPIE: Yeah, who knows. But it's tough.

SENEY: I want to shift a little bit and ask you about the California congressional delegation. It was a large delegation [forty-five members]. . .

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<sup>1</sup> Staff Assistant on the National Security Council 1981-1986.

<sup>2</sup>National Security Advisor to President Reagan 1985-1986.



CHAPPIE: . . . Yeah, the largest . . .

SENEY: . . . Certainly influential during the time that you were a member of it. Did you meet as a California delegation from time to time?

CHAPPIE: [Laughter] You mean Democrats and Republicans?

SENEY: Yes.

CHAPPIE: Ho! [Laughter] Perish the thought. Jesus Christ, I mean it was like Arabs and Jews. A number of us in our caucus, quote, unquote the moderates, would propose that why don't you get together with [Congressman] Don Edwards? [Congressman] Don [H.] Clausen, he was the dean of our caucus, and, hell, he was an affable old guy, and he'd go over and talk to Edwards.

SENEY: Let me stop you. When you say caucus, you mean the California republican members of the congress.

CHAPPIE: The conference, as it's called there. They don't call it the caucus. Yeah, the Democrat conference, what I keep calling the caucus. Yes, the California Republican delegates back there. They would agree to agree to meet, and then they would agree that in the best interest of everyone, they better not meet. There was, and I'm sure there still is, communication between the two deans, but it would be absolute

pandemonium to get forty-five guys [together] and then the bomb throwers on both sides. . . .

We had the [Congressman Robert E.] Badham, the hard core. What the hell, Bill. . . . He's crazy anyhow. I'll think about him pretty soon. He's a retreaded Democrat who's now right-wing Republican.

SENEY: [Congressman William E.] Dannemeyer.

CHAPPIE: Bill Dannemeyer. Then if you get them with [Congressman Ronald V.] Ron Dellums and [Congressman] George Miller, for example, on the other side, I don't want to be any part of that.

SENEY: There were no times when you all as a delegation would band together to . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . I don't think I ever experienced that once in six years. We were all over the place. And oft times we had as much trouble keeping our guys on the reservation as did the Democrats.

SENEY: I wonder if part of it might have been the fact that you had a Californian as president, senior staff people who were Californians, and so Californians may not have been treated badly by the incumbent administration. I'm suggesting there may not have been a need for California congressional delegation . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . Oh, boy, if there was ever a need, we needed it. We still need it. I always use New York as an example, or Massachusetts, when they had an important issue to their state, I mean everybody got in line. It was like an old mama skunk with her little ones. Boy, right down the road. Our guys were just like unguided missiles--all over the place. I don't know.

There's no doubt that there's competition and rivalry among the ranks of those delegations. Texas, I mean when they had an issue, yahoo, they were there. But our guys were like a damn band of sheep with a coyote in the middle of them, all over the place. [Laughter] You sit there and watch that [electronic voting] board and begin to have your Republican guys peel off on a real significant issue. You go back and sit in your office and say, "What the hell am I doing here?" [Laughter]

SENEY: Let me ask you about something else that has to do with the California delegation, and this has to do with reapportionment after the 1980 census. My understanding is in 1960 and especially in 1970 [Congressman A. Phillip] Phil Burton of San Francisco was active in both of those as well as the 1980 reapportionment.

CHAPPIE: All three of them.

SENEY: In 1960 and 1970 it was really "take care of the incumbents" whether they were Republicans or Democrats.

CHAPPIE: Sweethearts, sweethearts.

SENEY: You get to 1980 and it's quite a different matter as far as Phil Burton is concerned.

CHAPPIE: Phil Burton at that point had begun to fail. He was really drinking himself into the grave. [Congressman] John [H.] Rousselot, [Congressman Robert K.] Bob Dornan, and even Bill Dannemeyer had infuriated him. They had absolutely

CHAPPIE: infuriated him, and I think that was when he began to lose his cool.

You'd get a call from Phil, 4:30 in the afternoon. "Hey, goddammit, get over here." I got along great with Phil. I'd wander over to the Rayburn Building, blinds would be drawn, almost dark in there, Phil would be sitting there with his bottle of vodka and a water glass full of it. "Oh, goddammit, want to talk. What do you hear?"

"I'm hearing this, that or the other thing. What are you hearing? What are you going to do to me, Phil?"

"Well, you are in your mother's arms."

And I'd say, "Yeah, she dropped me once and it kind of hurt."

But if he told you that he was going to take care of you, he took care of you. In my instance, they needed some more Democrat votes to shore up [Congressman Douglas H.] Bosco. Bosco was having some problems. So we just sat down and said, "Which ones would you like to lose, Gino?" You cut the deal with him.

But he got so incensed with those three guys in our caucus that he eliminated Rousselot's district, virtually eliminated Dornan's. He couldn't do much to Dannemeyer. He just yelled, blasphemed him. Rousselot was gone, Dornan won and that kind of hurt Phil, but even at that time he was the key. And I recall in the prior instances, he'd come out to the state legislature, and he'd just twist arms, not only in the congressional reapportionment but in the assembly and senate.

He had it all in his head. It was frightening. You could talk about a precinct in Iowa, and he could tell you what the demographics were. All over the nation. Just an incredible, incredible ability. That was his life. When he lost the speakership by one vote, or the majority

leadership, that began his demise. It was unfortunate. But I had great regard for the guy's ability. And he never, never screwed me over. I helped his brother, [Assemblyman] John [H. Burton], in the California legislature--really saved his ass once--and neither of them forgot it. That's the beauty of the system. It's family, and you take care of one another. Not anymore. That's why I'm glad I'm going.

SENEY: Well, he was a legendary individual.

CHAPPIE: Oh, yeah, yeah. Real gentleman. He could be brutal, but he knew how to work the system. And I dare say with perhaps one or two exceptions, you could today talk with some of the people he served with, and they'd give him high marks, high marks.

SENEY: When you left the congress, you came back to California, back to your ranch, I take it.

CHAPPIE: What was left of it.

SENEY: What was left of it. What did you do then?

CHAPPIE: Well, I got to looking around. I had remarried, I had done a little traveling, and decided that we, Nancy and I, decided we'd settle up on the Georgetown Divide, and we found a patch of ground up there in the piney woods, and I went to clearing ground and built ourselves a home.

Then my predecessor got in mischief. Unlike us Italians who raise garlic, he was raising pot.

SENEY: Your predecessor here on the [El Dorado] board of supervisors.

CHAPPIE: Yes. yes. It was a great ground swell when the vacancy developed, people calling, "Hey, Gino."

And I kept saying, "No. Hell, no, I ain't going to go. I'm having fun. I'm retired, you know, I'm doing my thing. We're going to travel." Then the governor [George Deukmejian] called. It's pretty hard to say no when the guv calls.

SENEY: Were you bored? Were you anxious to get back to politics?

CHAPPIE: Well, when the vacancy occurred, and I had been kind of interested watching the kid, and some of the things going on in the terms of water development, it was absolute chaos. There's a certain degree of vanity and ego in all of us. And I'm saying, "God all mighty, that ain't the way to go in old Dad's opinion." The more I looked and the more I got to thinking. Then the guv called. Why not?

I began to understand what some of the pressures were, some of the legislators trying to control the board. At least in the opinion of a

lot of people around here. So I said, "OK, I'll do it."

Then I got involved. I'm prone to be controversial on occasions. Folks start calling me "sonabitch." And I said, "Well, they're going to call me one, I'm going to start behaving like one." I had really planned to let the term run, and then I looked around to see what was on the horizon in terms of candidates, what their views were and are, and I said, "Well, I guess I'll let the ego take hold and go for it."

SENEY: So you are running for re-election?

CHAPPIE: Absolutely.

SENEY: Let's go back to the call from Governor Deukmejian. Tell me about that.

CHAPPIE: There would been a lot of pressure down there. I just called down to the appointment secretary and said, "Terry [Terrance Flanigan], I guess you got to know there are a lot of people who are on my butt to go. I'm kind of ambivalent. If you can't find a real knight in shining armor, well, I'll think about it." So I didn't close the door.

The guy called, said, "Gino, there's a lot of support for you. Would you do it? Will you work at it? Will you run for re-election?"



I said, "Under those circumstances, why not?"

SENEY: Is that all he asked you to agree to? To run for re-election? Did he express any other interest to you about the appointment?

CHAPPIE: He knows I don't deal that way, and I know that he doesn't deal that way either. He's appointed me to two other commissions in the state. And I don't say it with any vanity, but I really covered his ass with that OHV [Off Highway Vehicle] Commission. The Nazis had taken that over. And there he asked me because he knew that I had implemented the initial legislation that started the program and kind of wet-nursed it through its infancy. It's a hallmark in the nation; all at once the crazies had taken over the commission because [Speaker] Willie [Brown] has two appointees, the president pro tem has two, and the governor has three, and two of his appointees were really screwing him over badly. There were two women on there. It's interesting, there were two women; one was Willie's appointee, and the other one was [Senate President pro tem] Dave's [Roberti]. And they went around and finessed it, and my first meeting all at once I'm chair. [Laughter] So we kind of took control of the thing. And it's come along pretty good. I'm

no longer the chair of it, but we got it redirected. So we have a mutual trust. I worked hard for Duke when he ran for AG [Attorney General in 1978] and supported him.

SENEY: Now he wouldn't become involved in the appointment process if the incumbents on the board could have agreed on a replacement, am I right about that?<sup>1</sup>

CHAPPIE: I'm trying to think back. I don't know. I believe it's on the city councils that the remaining members can appoint, and if they can't in a period of time, the gov does, but I don't think there's that option on the board. I'd have to go back and check, but I don't think that option is available. The gov has so many days within which to do it, and you do it.

SENEY: What was it like to come back after an interruption of so many years; from 1964 to 1989?

CHAPPIE: The actors change, but the scenario never changes. I think the prime example was when I left the board in '64, we were in heated debate over a little project called the White Rock penstock. It was part of the water development

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<sup>1</sup>"Whenever a vacancy occurs in a board of supervisors, the governor shall fill the vacancy. The appointee shall hold office until the election and qualification of his successor."  
Deering's California Codes Annotated. Government Code 25060.

for the future of the county. When I came back, my first meeting as a member of the County Water Agency--supervisor's different hat--first item on the agenda was White Rock penstock. What, thirty years later. Nothing changes.

Certainly, the pressures are greater than they were. There used to be 6,000 people in this county--more cows than people. The mandates of state government and federal government, now you have to have a committee to pick your nose.

I started pre-Brown Act,<sup>1</sup> where you could go across the street to the annex, as we called the local pub, and work things out in a businesslike fashion. We'd sit down with the news media and say, "Here's what we're going to do with this and that. Here's what we're going to do to him." But that's all changed now. We have openness and light. Things move a lot slower, more cumbersome, more costly. The job is far more difficult.

SENEY: Are you enjoying it?

CHAPPIE: Oh, I'm having a ball, having a ball. I enjoy the joust, more importantly I enjoy the people though. They're great. About 99 percent of them

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<sup>1</sup>The open meeting law for public bodies. West's Annotated California Codes. Government Code 54950 et. seq.

are real neat. That other 1 percent sure as hell keeps you honest. [Laughter]

SENEY: Do you find your colleagues on the board have maybe some tendency to defer to you based on your experience and knowledge of politics?

CHAPPIE: I brought about--damn, I hate to say these things--but I brought about some subtle changes on the board. I feel very strongly, it was like with the mini-skirts, there has to be some dignity and decor in the ranks of public

CHAPPIE: servants. Here, for example, as with the OHV Commission there was chaos, the chair would tell people to "Sit down and shut up, otherwise get out." I don't buy that from a public servant. There was a habit here of greeting everyone by their first names. I address my colleagues as Mr. or Ms., and I address our staff people who are in attendance by their proper name, and the board's kind of picked up on that. A little different tempo, a little attitude.

On occasion they will defer to me. Oft times they will come into the office and say, "How do you think we should handle this?" And I go to them for counsel too. You know I'm still learning. Things are different. If nothing else, I have a good warm feeling now. We're not

two to two, very few three to two votes, virtually no four to one. We try and reason together. In the long run it works out a lot better.

The board had a very low popularity rating when I came back. I don't know if it's increased that substantially, but there is a different feeling. They're not getting short shift. We had a couple of young bucks here that were prone to dictate and pontificate and demean people. We had a lot of flagellating the staff in public. I told them, "There ain't gonna be no more of that. If you want to criticize or reprimand staff, by God, you do it behind the door." So I've good vibes, good vibes.

SENEY: So you are running for re-election? You've got two opponents. How do they look?

CHAPPIE: One is a young man. He ran recently for the public utilities district board, and did poorly. There was recently a vacancy on the school board up there, and I suggested, "Gary [Grimm], why don't you get in there and get your feet wet, see how the system works. You got a bright future" He opted not to. I think he's looking for steady income.

The other guy is a very interesting opponent. He came here about ten, eleven years [ago] with his shirt on his back, got into commercial rafting. He was a leader in the charge to kill the water project called SOFAR [South Fork of the American River], very effective. He went to bed with [Congressman] Howard [L.] Berman, then assemblyman now congressman. He is quite a cunning linguist, and he is involved in the American River Land Trust which proposes to further lock up the river through land exchanges. They're talking about keeping that a pristine, undeveloped valley. He's one of the designees to the study of the National Recreation Area. He makes no bones about it, he is totally anti-growth. He's an IGM [I Got Mine, Jack, butt off]. So it's an interesting campaign. He makes no bones about it. He's got his, and he wants to lock that river up for he and his fellow rafters.

SENEY: What do you think you are going to have to spend on this campaign?

CHAPPIE: I ran my first campaign here for \$96, and I suspect this one's going to cost \$25,000 or \$30,000 which is really unconscionable, but the price of doing business has gone up. Everything is costly. I guess I'd use the same example.

CHAPPIE: When I was farming, I could go in the newspaper and advertise a pen lot of steers; my credit was good, I got a good rate. I come in as a politician, I got to have cash on the barrelhead, the price is twice as high because a lot of guys have been nerds, you know. So you accept that; that's part of the price of doing business in the campaign. That's interesting. There's a lot of fear by some of your supporters saying, "Gee whiz, you can't take this guy's money or that, because he's a developer, or he's friendly or related to so-and-so." I've said repeatedly over the years that I'll take anyone's money. When they're right, I'm with them, and when they're wrong, they can be assured, I'm going to vote a'gin 'em. And I've never had a problem in that respect. The record is pretty clear, documented particularly during the rice war which lead to Mr. [Congressman Tony] Coehlo's demise. I kept sending, virtually on a weekly basis, substantial checks back to Mr. Grover Connell who was tied with Tonsun Park.<sup>1</sup> And Mr. Coehlo took about a hundred thou[sand], and it came home to haunt him. So it's a matter of using your head, I guess. So I'm taking money; there's some that I

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<sup>1</sup>Lobbyist in Washington, D.C. during the seventies.

have returned because I don't feel that I can, in any circumstance, work with those folks. So I just close that door for openers.

[End of Tape 9, Side A]

[Begin Tape 9, Side B]

SENEY: One thing I'd like to ask you about because I know you are involved in it, is. . . . And let me start by making it specific, Congressman Shumway has just decided not to run for re-election, and I know you have been active in counseling whomever might be the successor in that, am I right in that?

CHAPPIE: Right.

SENEY: I want you to tell me a little about that. And then I want you to tell about what you're doing in terms of the Republican party statewide these days, who calls on you, and what you do, and what interest you take and so forth.

CHAPPIE: I've been counseling. . . . Geez, I should go into business. When I got to the legislature, even in those days I was a little bit older than a lot of the guys because I was in my forties because of the war and all that good stuff. I found that, man, we were losing a lot of good people. They'd come to Sacramento, bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, leave the wife and kids home.



First thing you know they got caught up in the booze and broads, that whole syndrome. A lot of marriages went to hell. And I instituted and implemented a kind of seminar--bull session--for incoming legislators and their wives, got some of the gals in the PALS [Poor and Lonesome Souls] club, tried to point out some of the pitfalls they were going to be confronted with. There are going to be a lot of freebies around. It's going to be easy to stray off the reservation, to

CHAPPIE: neglect their family responsibilities. Granted the salary is poor, but, by God, you'd better find a way--particularly when you're south of the Tehachapi, and that's where most of them were from--you, by God, better find a way to bring your families to Sacramento. So that you have that tie. And if you want to fly to the district every night, that's fine. But you are going to come back the next morning. That program's still in place, believe it or not.

I got to the congress late. So, obviously, nobody needed counseling. Perhaps most of all me because that's what ultimately lead to the dissolution of my first marriage.

My first wife really didn't have a taste for politics. She put up with it. God love her, she

knew I enjoyed it. I think she had some fun in it, but I think it kind of frightened her. And ultimately, we got to D. C., and she just freaked. So we amiably decided there was no need for both of us to be unhappy the rest of our lives, and we dissolved the marriage.

Some of my five kids still have some problems with that. But then, like I tell them, you made your bed, I made mine, we're going to sleep in it. Don't sweat it.

SENEY: Some political wives take part in campaigns and help with advice and counsel, was that the role your first wife played? Did she interest herself at all in that sort of thing?

CHAPPIE: She would attend most of the functions with me, but she was a homebody, and, God love her, she virtually raised those kids because I was gone a lot of the time, even though I commuted. With a district that size you'd get back from Bishop at three in the morning and get up at five-thirty and head out for the next day.

Some of my kids, even when I was supervisor, had a dislike for politics, because it was the "Nah, nah, nah, nah, nah just because your old man's a politician," and the fights would erupt. I had two of them that got involved in politics.

One daughter's [Tina Chappie] the judge, and the other kid [John Chappie] for a while served on a utility district board and the high school board. But others didn't enjoy politics too much.

Living in the fish bowl thing gets to kids. You try to shelter them as much as you can but it is difficult. The miniskirt thing--I immediately had the media up there with their television cameras taking pictures of their knees and their skirts. [Laughter] Crazy.

SENEY: Your second wife is more politically oriented?

CHAPPIE: She doesn't really get that deeply involved. And she's not feeling too well among other things. We talk a lot. She is a good counselor, a good confidante. I know that she wasn't enthralled with me jumping into this thing, but she said, "Gino, I know that you enjoy it, and that you love it, and it's part of your life, and I'll just attune myself to going along with you."

SENEY: Are you going to retire, or are they going to carry you out feet first?

CHAPPIE: No, I'm going to hang it up after this one. That's for damn sure. I've still got a lot of traveling to do, and a lot of things to do, and a lot of brush to cut. [Laughter]

SENEY: Well, we've talked about a lot of things, is there anything you would like to add that we haven't covered? Are there any general thoughts that you would like to . . .

CHAPPIE: . . . No, no. I think you've delved into a lot of areas that I'd plumb forgotten, really. I don't think I've ever had a real, real bad moment in the process though. Some pretty traumatic things have happened--the crisis, my God, if I lose this bill, or if I lose this election--and yet when you look back, what the hell were those traumatic experiences? What were the barnburning, earthshaking bills? I can't remember. With the bare bones budget with Reagan . . .

SENEY: . . . You're smiling when you say these things. You enjoy it.

CHAPPIE: Yeah, yeah. It's fun, it's fun. I enjoy the joust, and the rapport that you develop even with your adversaries. When it is all over, you can go out and have a drink and harass one another and get ready for the next one. That's the beauty of the system. And I guess if I have one regret, it's that there is such an attitude out there, an apathy as relates to the system. That's what scares you because someday if these

damn fools don't take care of it, they're going to lose it, whether it be through a regional government, or government by consensus, or government by bureaucracy. They're too busy watching the boob tube.

SENEY: Well, let me thank you on behalf of the State Archives for taking part in this project. We appreciate it.

CHAPPIE: You really honored me, by God. I never thought when I brought that truck load of junk down that this would develop out of it. That was just some place to get rid of it as far as I was concerned.

SENEY: All those materials you brought me were very valuable.

CHAPPIE: Great, great. Lot of that credit goes to Dorothy Delaney. She was very, very meticulous.

[Laughter]

SENEY: Well, thank you very much, Congressman.

CHAPPIE: My pleasure.

[End Tape 9, Side B]

NAMES LIST

State Government Oral History Program

Interviewee Eugene A. Chappie

List Compiler/Editor Donald B. Seney

Cooperating Institution Oral History Program, Center  
for California Studies, California State University,  
Sacramento

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